

**A SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC DESCRIPTION OF GENDER ROLE
EXPERIENCES AND GENDER TRANSFORMATION IN A GOVERNMENT
ORGANISATION**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Reshmika Chaithram, hereby declare that the thesis titled “A systems psychodynamic description of gender role experiences and gender transformation in a government organisation” is my own work, and that all sources that I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that ethical clearance to conduct the research had been obtained from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa (Unisa). I also declare that the study was carried out in strict accordance with UNISA’s Policy on Research Ethics and that I conducted the research with the highest integrity during all phases of the research process, taking into account Unisa’s Policy on Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism.



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SUMMARY

A SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC DESCRIPTION OF GENDER ROLE EXPERIENCES AND GENDER TRANSFORMATION IN A GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION

by

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DEPARTMENT: Industrial and Organisational Psychology

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The focus of this research was to describe gender role experiences and gender transformation from a systems psychodynamic stance. Women have fought to overcome past oppressions but society intended to label women continually as traditional homemakers. In organisations, women are still subjected to receiving certain non-challenging jobs, such as administrative tasks, secretarial and office assistant duties as compared to men who fulfil professional and managerial roles. Men, on the other hand, experience the daily pressures of living up to societal brandings, which regard them as tough bosses and breadwinners. Hermeneutic phenomenology enabled participants to share their lived gender role experiences. Furthermore, the hermeneutic paradigm assisted the researcher with an in-depth understanding of participants' phenomenological experiences. The researcher therefore explored, analysed and described the phenomenological gender experiences of male and female employees and a transgender employee from a systems psychodynamic stance. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four male and four female participants. Men and women often projected positive behaviours onto each other that would result in them challenging and breaking the obsolete, stereotypical thinking handed out by society. The isolation and loneliness experienced by transgender persons manifest in unauthentic and false living. The organisation created high levels of anxiety in its employees' which contributed towards male, female and transgender role experiences. Individual defence mechanisms were used as a method of addressing anxieties. Men, women and

transgender persons were affected by their constant need for recognition and advancement in the organisation but refused to show any concerns for fear of consequences from the leaders of the organisation. Men, women and transgender persons became containers and shared the emotional burdens of the organisation and their family life in different ways. Recommendations for gender transformative approaches are discussed to address issues of inequality in the organisation.

KEY TERMS

Systems psychodynamics, gender, gender inequality, gender transformation, system, anxiety, transgender experiences, family, gender role, defence mechanisms

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an outline of the study, which focused on the systems psychodynamics of gender role experiences and gender transformation in a government organisation. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the background and motivation for the study, followed by the problem statement and the aims of the study. The paradigm perspective is followed by the research design and the chapter is concluded with a chapter summary and the layout to the remaining chapters.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Gender is an institutionalised system of social practices, which divides individuals into two significant classifications, namely men and women (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Inequality is based on disparities in esteem, status and respect, which are constructed on resources and power (Ridgeway, 2014). According to Kane (1998), the attitude of women in relation to gender inequality is dissimilar to that of men. Women are concerned about gender inequality in the employment area, which is less threatening to men, while men are concerned from a domestic inequality and social interaction perspective (Kane, 1998). The distinct differences in the classification of men and women are related to personality, behaviours and expectations, which are changeable over time (Irefin, Ifah, & Bwala, 2012) and are built on societal characteristics placed on individuals based on their sex (Commission for Gender Equality, 2000). Gender inequality stems from distinct differences in an individual's gender and results in the unequal treatment towards both genders. Throughout centuries, gender inequality continues to display unique and universal characteristics in both society and organisations. In an organisation, both men and women are unfortunate role players who face unfair discrimination (Rao & Kelleher, 2003).

Organisations are institutions where rules are obeyed (Rao & Kelleher, 2003) and where men and women are unconsciously excluded from certain activities that do not consider gender (Irefin *et al.*, 2012). According to Viviers, Mans-Kemp, and Fawcett (2017), an increase in male colleagues result in promotional inconveniences for women whereas an increase in male supervisors present future problems for women ensuing in obstacles or delays in promotions. Institutional rules are entwined in hierarchies, work practices and beliefs, and indicate how resources in organisations are allocated and how tasks, responsibilities and values are delegated (Rao & Kelleher, 2003). Gender equality assists in eliminating organisational issues, such as blaming and shaming, finger pointing and gender alienation towards individuals. Challenging gender inequality addresses emotional wellness based on fear, shame and loss of power, anxiety and depression, enhancing positive emotions, altering perceptions and career advancements (Nielsen, 2016). Gender issues are addressed by driving essential elements, such as work design, performance reward systems, promotions and career development, which comprise a mutual process between the organisation and its employees (Robbins, Judge, & Odendaal, 2009) in maintaining, developing and retaining a competent and diverse workforce (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Research studies reveal that job alterations balance both family and work life careers and serve as beneficial towards the needs of an individual (Robbins *et al.*, 2009).

Gender inequality is transparent through the structures, processes and practices of the organisation (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Littlefield, McLane-Davison, and Vakalahi (2015), argued that the tackling of gender inequality in the legislation of South Africa is likely to create a ripple effect in the adherence of gender legislation within organisations. Furthermore, organisations are required to ensure that recruitment and employment policies provide equal access and opportunities to all individuals in order to safeguard their unique lifestyles, familial needs and work styles of individuals (Littlefield *et al.*, 2015). In addressing inequalities, organisations bring forth opportunities by introducing a unique organisational culture that appreciates diversity (Taneja, Pryor, & Oyler, 2012). The inequalities in gender are reduced (Rao & Kelleher, 2003) by the introduction of organisational changes during the planning and implementation phases, while simultaneously empowering men and women to reach their full potential (Balsam, 2016). A combined workforce of men

and women as well as the organisation is guaranteed to benefit from gender transformation (Mena, 2016) creating a ripple effect in the introduction of diverse interests, values and traits (Viviers *et al.*, 2017).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The strengths, knowledge, experiences and needs of men and women in families, communities and societies are the roots of gender inequality (Littlefield *et al.*, 2015). Gender inequality in men and women has been explored and re-explored, defined and re-defined by individuals, scholars, decision-makers and organisations (Littlefield *et al.*, 2015). The major defining feature of most organisations is gender (Irefin *et al.*, 2012). Organisations are not only structured by gender but are also constituted by and through it (Irefin *et al.*, 2012). An organisation is a collection of interdependent parts utilising, transforming and joining all individuals to assist in its problem solving (Irefin *et al.*, 2012). A movement or differentiation to any part of an individual spills negativity over into one or another part of the individual being influenced. The relationship between men and women are due to changes in society and organisations. In taking into consideration that the behaviour of men and women is dependent on society, it is believed that while men are preoccupied with work, women are involved with specific gender types (Commission for Gender Equality, 2000).

The unique gender role that transgenders express to the world is often accompanied by rejection within their family unit as well as from outside (Divan, Cortez, Smelyanskaya, & Keatley, 2016). In the organisation, rejection is often reflected in their silence and in ways in which they shroud themselves (Bizjak, 2018). Transgenders usually succumb to changing and having many job roles within their life due to the provocation and victimisation that they are faced with, especially in organisations where management lacks in the need to protect them (Whittle, Turner, & Al-Alami, 2007). These types of hostile environments within organisations brings forth the need to fight for survival. Transgenders often feel that their safety is threatened resulting in the deterioration of their mental and emotional well-being (Divan *et al.*, 2016).

Due to favouritism in organisations, gender inequality pre-empts the denying of equal recruitment opportunities, relationships, poverty, and training and development skills, which dampens prospects of career growth (Robbins *et al.*, 2009). The real purpose of organisational change becomes inadequate when gender and organisational change efforts are disintegrated (Rao & Kelleher, 2003). Organisational trends in relation to gender issues are viewed as taboo bringing forth neglect towards gender (Irefin *et al.*, 2012). Ridgeway (2014) argued that status is the driving factor towards the inequality of group differences rather than mere individual differences in resources and power. Thus, society continually persists in regarding women as the 'lesser sex' with positions in the home, and describing men as the 'stronger and more powerful sex' with a place in the organisation that is only one fit for them. It is suggested for organisations to recognise the variances that males and females display and to use it to advance and transform the organisation (Parcheta, Kaifi, & Khanfar, 2013). This challenge of gender inequality and its transformation has never been explicitly approached and described from a systems psychodynamics stance, as well as an African context.

In addressing the above issues, the following research question was formulated:
How can gender role experiences and gender transformation in a government organisation be described from a systems psychodynamic perspective?

1.4 AIMS

The general aim of this research was to describe gender role experiences and gender transformation in a government organisation from a systems psychodynamic stance.

The research endeavoured to achieve the following specific aims:

1.4.1 Specific literature aims

The following were specific literature aims relevant to the study:

- to explore organisations from the systems psychodynamic stance;

- to explore gender, gender roles and gender inequality in the literature; and
- to explore gender transformation in the literature.

1.4.2 Specific empirical aims

The following were empirical aims relevant to the study:

- to describe the gender role experiences and gender transformation of employees in a government organisation from a systems psychodynamic perspective; and
- to make recommendations to the participating organisation based on the findings from the study.

1.5 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

The research paradigm will be discussed together with the psychological paradigm.

1.5.1 The psychological paradigm

The theoretical (psychological) paradigm of this research study was based on the systems psychodynamic perspective. Systems psychodynamics is defined as an interdisciplinary field that assimilates three disciplines: the practice of psychoanalysis, the theories and methods of group relations, and open systems perspectives (Fraher, 2004b; Nossal, 2007; Petriglieri, 2020). Systems psychodynamics is a collection of psychological theories, which is used within groups and organisations to uncover the mode in which social structure and norms inhibit or support the inner world of individuals', and the ways in which the inner worlds of individuals', shape these structures and norms of organisations resulting in them being either inflexible or adaptable (Fraher, 2004a; Petriglieri, 2020). System psychodynamics posits understanding towards conscious and unconscious behaviours and rational and irrational behaviours (Cilliers, 2003b) due to emotional experiences within the system (Nossal, 2007). The difference in people's behaviour is dependent on the structure of personality, namely the id, the ego, and the superego (Reppen, 1985). Focus is not purely attributed to an individual's behaviour

but also towards the behaviour of the systemic group and the behaviour of the organisation, which affects various systems, most importantly the individual (Nossal, 2007). According to Fraher (2004b), systems psychodynamics provides a way of thinking about, energising, and motivating forces that stem from interconnections between various groups and sub-units of social systems.

1.5.1.1 Psychoanalytical theory

The practice of psychoanalysis materialised in the late 1800s when its expansion in thinking positioned the foundation for Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theories (Fraher, 2004b). Freud's psychoanalytical theories, which connected to people and his influence over Melanie Klein's work, advocated the theoretical foundation of systems psychodynamics (Fraher, 2004a). According to the psychoanalytical theory, it is apparent that there are conflicts between what people would logically 'like' to do (the id) and what they 'should' do (the superego) (Deal, 2007). These conflicts bring forth unconscious behaviours, which result in energising and directing behaviours in many ways (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992).

1.5.1.2 Group relations theory

Group relations theory is known as the second element of the systems psychodynamic triangle. It is an interdisciplinary field that supports psychodynamic principles and experiential learning methods in order to explore groups as holistic social systems (Fraher, 2004a). This is however a movement away from psychoanalysis due to explorations of the group-as-a-whole (Geldenhuis, 2012). Le Bon (1896, cited in Fraher, 2004b) indicates that individuals surrender some part of themselves when entering large groups where vulnerability towards influence and suggestions are prominent, while Freud (cited in Fraher, 2004b) claims that inimitable pictures of regression in mental activities relate to early stages that occur when entering groups. Groups operate using two modes: the productive sophisticated group, also known as the work group, and the basic assumption group where fundamental tasks relate to relieving group anxieties that direct towards pain and emotions brought upon by work (Bion, 1961).

1.5.1.3 *Open systems theory*

The open systems theory is known as the third element of the systems psychodynamic triad (Fraher, 2004b). According to the open systems theory, an organisation is completely dependent on its affiliation with the environment. Despite the varied outlook of many theorists, they all share one belief, which asserts that the open system theory is highly influenced by its environment (Bastedo, 2004). Developments in the open systems theory makes it impossible to review affiliations between individuals and work groups, work groups and the organisation, and the organisation and its environment concurrently (Fraher, 2004a).

1.5.2 **The research paradigm**

The research paradigm for this study was hermeneutics. The focus of the hermeneutics approach is on the subjective experiences of individuals and groups, in an attempt to expose challenges experienced by individuals (Kafle, 2011). The hermeneutic approach is used to analyse, order and comprehend the interpreted data (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Single hermeneutics is applied for participants to interpret themselves and their reality directly (Fangen, 2015). Double hermeneutics is utilised by researchers in the hope of understanding reality and gaining information applicable to such reality (Fangen, 2015), and assists in explaining why researchers are able to interpret the experiences of others (Rennie, 2012). Triple hermeneutics involves critical and theoretical interpretations, which consist of unconscious urges and needs and is more motivating from an ethical point of view, in comparison to the interpretations of double hermeneutics (Fangen, 2015). Triple hermeneutics is used as a means of critically analysing the understanding of an individual, while searching for hidden agendas and needs (Fangen, 2015). Triple hermeneutics is a critical theory incorporating double hermeneutics as well as critical analysis of structures and processes and therefore affects the way in which the researcher freely interprets individuals and situations (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

A number of assumptions supports and strengthens the research paradigm. *Ontology* examines reality, including beliefs relating to the nature of the reality, and questions whether there is one verifiable reality or multiple realities (Chilisa &

Kawulich, 2012). Ontology represents a concept that is challenging since it creates difficulty in grasping the actual conceptualisation (Mason, 2002). The researcher remains steadfast and interpretive within the study despite the questions raised from an ontological point of view. The researcher takes into account that an individual's personal reality is, dependent on the mind, which cannot be generalised. It is believed that reality consists of multiple layers in which a few participants possess deep and unobservable layers (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012).

Epistemology means knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017), and is concerned with 'how do we know what we know?' (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). The nature of epistemology focuses upon the researcher's acquired human knowledge and comprehension in order to create a deepened understanding (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The researcher considers the received data as statements of belief due to their easy confirmability, disconfirm-ability and verifiability (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). The researcher acknowledges that the gathered data collection is referred to as 'hard data', which is unbiased and independent, away from the values, interests and emotions of the researcher (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). The researcher maintains a relationship, which is not based upon any hierarchy. Despite the study being interpretative, the researcher exhibits the transformation of the parties, participants and the researcher herself (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012).

Axiology focuses upon the values and ethics during a research project (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It questions the integrity of researchers and is concerned with how researchers deal with their values as well as the values of their research participants (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2009). Axiology involves the defining, evaluating and understanding of concepts, which project right and wrongful behaviour pertaining to the research project (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Methodology involves the flow within the systematic process of the research project and encompasses areas such as research design, research methods, research approaches and research procedures that are used during data collection and which are acquired in order to gain knowledge about the research problem (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The current research followed a qualitative design with a descriptive approach. The research study entails exploratory case studies, which form part of the data collection method.

1.6.1 Research approach

The use of qualitative research relies on its detailed focus towards complex issues, such as human experiences and behaviour. It further assists with the views and experiences of all research participants during research projects (Isaacs, 2014). Qualitative theorists describe three main purposes for qualitative research: to explore, explain and/or describe the matter of interest. In literature, most qualitative studies are realised as descriptive and exploratory, since they venture into unexplored and descriptive paths (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Qualitative research provides a broadened and deepened understanding of how situations and experiences of individuals manifested in the manner that they did (Hancock, Windridge, & Ockleford, 2007). The qualitative research approach makes use of case studies, naturalistic observations, surveys, interviews, and focus groups (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005). The following are characteristics of the qualitative research approach, which further indicates why this approach was used within the current research study, namely qualitative research –

- explains the various ways in which people look at reality;
- accommodates complexity by incorporating the real world;
- investigates behaviour within its natural environment and includes no manipulation of variables;
- focuses on the experiences of individuals and collects data which cannot be expressed statistically;
- is descriptive and interpretative and often leads to the development of new principles and notions or to an investigation into the administration of the organisation; and

- complements flexibility while utilising a systematic research process (Hancock *et al.*, 2007).

1.6.2 Research strategy

The researcher made use of explorative research using exploratory case studies, which served as a point of interest. Exploratory case studies closely scrutinise data at both surface and deep level (unconscious) (Zainal, 2007). Using exploratory case studies allows the researcher to present data of real-life situations while providing insights into the detailed behaviours of participants (Zainal, 2007).

1.6.3 Research method

The research methodology in this study focused on the research setting, the researcher's roles, sampling, data collection methods, recording and analysis of the data, and the strategies employed to ensure quality data, including all ethical considerations.

1.6.3.1 Research setting

The research for this study was conducted within a South African-based government organisation. The organisation was in a period of restructuring among its leadership roles. This restructuring in leadership roles brought forth undeniable changes and a struggle for some to cope with the new management. Employees employed in micro positions experienced pressure in proving their worth and value during the implementation of ongoing changes. Confidence levels were dropping and were almost non-existent. The stress in the situation was causing managers and staff to bring out the worst in themselves and each other which resulted in pressure on relationship building (Veldsman & Johnson, 2016). Men, women and trans-genders did not feel recognised and appreciated in the organisation due to gender-related issues. The setting used for the interviews was the office space of the participants. Participants found that they felt most relaxed and comfortable within this space. The researcher physically visited the natural setting of participants to observe and record behaviour and to assess responses to questions asked. According to Atieno (2009),

the behaviour of humans is influenced by the setting within which such behaviours occur.

1.6.3.2 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

In qualitative research, research is transported via the human instrument, in this case, the researcher (Barrett, 2007). During the study, the researcher acts as an etic with an outsider's objective view, and plays a role in understanding the participant's phenomenal world through the study of events, actions, conversations and interactions (Barrett, 2007). Furthermore, the researcher remains an observer during probing questions, listening to responses, followed up by more probing questions in order to converse and understand on a deeper level (Barrett, 2007).

1.6.3.3 Sampling

Research studies are dependent on samples and the method in which its participants are selected resulting in a positive or negative success rate (Salkind, 2014). In qualitative research, the sample is dependent on a small group of people, who have experiences related to the research study (Salkind, 2014). The sample for this study consisted of eight government officials: three males, four females and one transgender who were employed by a South African-based government organisation. Selection was made in terms of age, number of years employed by the organisation and experience within the organisation.

The chosen sample type for this study was that of convenience due to the easy accessibility of convenience sampling to the researcher (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005) and the participants' willingness to participate (Anderson, 2010). This sampling technique served as an advantage in conducting and gaining valuable and limitless information from participants (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005).

1.6.3.4 Data collection method

Semi-structured interviews are preferred since they enable clarification and further accommodate the probing and cross-checking of questions (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005).

Semi-structured interviews provide a wealth of information, and they are inexpensive and efficient (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005). Open-ended questions enable participants to elaborate on responses and allow follow-up questions from the researcher (Salkind, 2014). Data is collected from interviews by using its simplistic approach to data collection. Interviews provide efficient methods of collecting data, which is applicable to the necessities of the research question and research design (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005).

Case studies provide a comprehensive analysis of one or more people, and further provide accurate case descriptions for expansion based on knowledge pertaining to human behaviour (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005). The data collection method used in the current study was semi-structured interviews, which made use of open-ended questions. The semi-structured interviews lasted one hour each and were conducted in the office space of the research participants. This space enabled participants to feel comfortable in familiar surroundings. The researcher welcomed this setting as an opportunity to observe non-verbal behaviour of participants, which could serve as valuable information (Salkind, 2014).

1.6.3.5 Recording of data

Data was gathered by means of a digital voice recorder. The researcher first asked permission from participants to record responses. Permission enables participants to experience their role in the study as being important, as compared to feeling as though they are taking a test (Salkind, 2014). Once the interview process had been concluded, the researcher transferred the data onto a personal computer, which was not linked to a network. This was to safeguard the data received from participants and to anonymise the identities of participant (Fangen, 2015). Pen and paper were used to make notes to interpret the data.

1.6.3.6 Data analysis

Triple hermeneutics allows the researcher to make an effort in the understanding and development of knowledge of the situation (Fangen, 2015). The interpretation of

unconscious needs is ethically more challenging than the double hermeneutics interpretation. Triple hermeneutics is the third element, and is a conglomeration of double hermeneutics and the critical interpretation of the researcher (Fangen, 2015). Thematic analysis was used to process and analyse the collected data (Kafle, 2011) by applying triple hermeneutics in this study (Fangen, 2015). Thematic analysis is interpretive and compatible with the hermeneutic methodology and assists in imparting openness for new data to surface in contrast with its manifesting themes (Rennie, 2012). Using thematic analysis allowed for the following of six phases:

- reading and re-reading data and making notes for familiarisation with the data;
- collating data;
- searching for themes;
- reviewing the themes;
- defining and naming themes; and
- producing the report by extracting the final analysis, which directs back to the research question and literature (Rennie, 2012).

1.6.3.7 Strategies employed to ensure quality data

Trustworthiness of the entire research process is critical in any qualitative research study. Trustworthiness is ensured through the activities of confirmability, transferability, credibility, dependability and ethicality (Anderson, 2010). The data is checked and re-checked to ensure accuracy, which ensures *confirmability* of the data (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). The researcher remains an observer and ensures that experiences and ideas are those of the participants and not his or her own, further enhancing the level of confirmability (Shenton, 2004). In this study and to enhance confirmability, the findings are as a result of the responses from the participants and not as part of the biases or perspectives of the researcher. *Transferability* is ensured through detailed accounts of experiences (thick description) that are provided to the reader to determine whether they apply to the situation of the reader or not (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). Transferability, in this study, is ensured by the thick description and detailed experiences of the participants.

The data is reported in an accurate manner, which expresses the experiences of the research participants, which in turn promotes confidence and *credibility* (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). In this study, the credibility of data is provided by means of the accurate reporting of responses by the participants. The process within this study is reported in this thesis in detail to ensure that the research can be repeated by other researchers to ensure *dependability* and in some studies, might yield the same findings (Shenton, 2004). The consistency of the research findings, as well as the thick description of information which allows for the repetition of the research at a later stage proved its dependability. Participants were requested to sign an informed consent form, they were free from coercion and were allowed to withdraw at any time from participating within the research study. This ensured *ethicality* (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005). In this study, the participants signed an informed consent form discussing the aim and purpose of the study, the nature of the study and allowed the participants the option of withdrawing from the study at any given time. The researcher remained aware of her own feelings and experiences during this study to ensure ethicality during the data collection process. The researcher developed a rapport with each of the participants which allowed her to remain neutral at all times in order to allow the participants to express their own experiences.

1.6.3.8 Ethical considerations

Voluntary and signed informed consent forms with the right to privacy were obtained from all participants. Information obtained from participants was treated with extreme confidentiality. The anonymity of the participants, as well as that of their organisation and relevant departments were respected and safeguarded in order to avoid them being harmed in any way. No information is or will be used in any way to inflict any damage toward participants. All documents are stored, locked away and protected in accordance with data protection regulations (Hancock *et al.*, 2007). Participants were protected from any physical and psychological harm in which the researcher offered to postpone the interview if a participant experienced anxiety or any other medically-related problem. The researcher provided further psychological support in cases where the participant felt nervous or stressed (Salkind, 2014).

1.6.3.9 Reporting of findings

The findings are based on a micro level, and a qualitative reporting writing style is used. The researcher reports on the findings of the study in the form of themes and sub-themes and by integrating these findings with relevant systems psychodynamic literature.

1.6.3.10 Recommendations

Recommendations are made for the participating government organisation and future research studies.

1.7 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The layout of the rest of the chapters is as follows:

- Chapter 2 – A systems psychodynamics perspective of organisations
- Chapter 3 – Gender role experiences and gender transformation
- Chapter 4 – Research methodology
- Chapter 5 – Research findings
- Chapter 6 – Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the scientific orientation to the research was discussed. The background and motivation comprised gender, gender inequality and gender transformation in organisations. The chapter proceeded to discuss the research problem, which assisted with the formulation of the research question. The research aims of the study, the psychological and research paradigm and the research design were discussed. The chapter concluded with a layout of the rest of the chapters in this thesis.

In the next chapter, organisations are explored from a systems psychodynamic stance.

CHAPTER 2:

A SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF ORGANISATIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an analysis of organisations from a systems psychodynamic stance is presented, by discussing micro, meso- and macro systems. The chapter commences by discussing organisations as systems, followed by exploring individuals as micro systems, the group as a meso-system and the total organisation as a macro system. Related systems psychodynamic concepts are also discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary.

2.2 THE ORGANISATION AS A SYSTEM

Over the past years, mainstream organisations provided responses toward the growing criticism of the neglect of gender, including numerous gendered insights and concerns (Lowe, Mills, & Mullen, 2002). Nowadays, modern organisations are rewarded with a wide continuum of discussions describing what organisations encapsulate (Osifo, 2012). Conceptualisations of organisations are reluctant to review organisations and are instead perceived from the era where organisations were defined using inherent bias in order to reveal the unification of select organisational features while excluding others (Van Tonder, 2014). An organisation is defined as a systematically structured social entity, which enables individuals to reach targets on a continuous basis (Osifo, 2012). An organisation is a physical entity, built with physical structures and consists of organisational members who operate from within the physical boundaries of such organisation (Rafaeli, 1996). Past research speculates the way organisations were described from a systems perspective, and how the very same perspectives are used in explaining the nature and functioning of an organisation (Millet, 1998). Organisations function optimally by attracting contemporary ways relating to what the organisation entails and by making use of ways to influence the organisation (Clawson, 2008).

According to Robbins et al. (2009), organisations function as consciously coordinated social units, composed of two or more people, operating on a relatively continuous basis to reach a common set of goals. The collective individuals within organisations share common interests in surviving the organisation while performing structured and collective activities to achieve a universal objective (Robbins *et al.*, 2009). Organisations are described and segregated using a wide range of metaphors: “machines”, “organisms”, “psychic prisons”, “brains”, “cultures” and “systems” (Millet, 1998, p.2). Millet’s metaphorical jargon facilitates in distinguishing relationships between the various types of theories, explanations and systems of the organisation as well as in identifying consistent themes apparent in the nature of organisations (Millet, 1998). The lens through which organisations are viewed defines how we observe change and how individuals are viewed as dealing with changes within organisations (Van Tonder, 2014). Individuals, groups, and organisations are interpreted as identifiable systems of acknowledged and exerted behaviours (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

The systems psychodynamic stance places particular emphasis on the organisation as a living system (Stapley, 1993). In the current study, the individuals who were employed by the organisation were unique, and their experiences had a unique rhythm, shape, and feel. Thus, organisations propel human behaviour that live through empirical and perceptual systems. Human behaviour is regulated by unconscious practices whereby thoughts and activities occur outside of conscious awareness (Diamond, Allcorn, & Stein, 2004). Systems psychodynamics rejects cogent and economic observations on work, and renders statistical data as useless when dealing with organisational behaviour or the individuals working in the system (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). The organisational man or woman is a person exposed to many incongruous wishes, fantasies, conflicts, defensive behaviours and anxieties, and is not just a conscious, determined, maximising machine of pleasures and pains (Kets de Vries, 2004).

2.2.1 Definition of a system

System, as a whole, relates to synergistic relationships such as human beings, the organisation and the community (Daft, 2011). A system is defined as a set of

interrelated components surrounded by boundaries, which absorbs inputs from other systems, and transforms them into outputs that serve a function in other systems (Clawson, 2008), and which has two or more related parts where a change in any one part changes all parts (Hanson, 1995). A system is further defined as a set of objects, the relationship between the objects, and the attributes of the objects (Van Tonder, 2014). It is believed that minute intricacies of systems theory confirm the continued significance of the perspective to the nature of organisations and organisational change, despite systems theory forming the foundation of organisations (Van Tonder, 2014). Systems thinking, in turn, is a mental discipline used for viewing patterns and interrelationships (Daft, 2011), while the systems concept presents ways to explain organisational behaviour (Millet, 1998). Systems are recognised as selling themselves off as unitary wholes, composed of subsystems and assisting to incorporate parts into units that function (Cumplings & Worley, 2009).

Systems theory originated in an attempt to understand sets of objects, the relationship between those objects, and the relationship between the sets of objects and their environments (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). It provides a dominant perspective on how organisations and their management are perceived, and assists in identifying the nature of organisations, their systems, and how the application of these contributes towards understanding organisations (Van Tonder, 2014). These applications promote a deep-rooted understanding regarding the environment of the organisation as well as the internal relations in the organisation. Organisational theorists endorsed systems theory to redefine organisations and the environment of organisations in an increasingly complex manner (Van Tonder, 2014). A systems focus is based on the interrelations within situations where a change in one part causes a change in all parts bringing forth a cause and effect relationship. Any action or inaction vibrating throughout the entire system will result in unpredictable effects (Hanson, 1995).

2.2.2 Open systems theory

The intention of any organisation is to be competitive in nature with a development in subsystems resulting in a complex growth in synchronicity and a transformation of

inputs into outputs (Chikere & Nwoka, 2015). Complexity levels within an open system are maintained as feedback mechanisms from diverse and distinguished environments in which all successful living systems are regarded as open systems enabling information and resources to flow (Bastedo, 2004). An open systems theory is defined as a continuous interface within its environment, and utilises raw materials, people, energy and information from its environment by transforming these into products or services that are disseminated back into the environment (Van Tonder, 2014). An open system elucidates interrelations between organisations and the external environment (Willyard, 2015) while simultaneously emphasising influences surrounding the external environment of the organisation (Alford, 2014). The development of open systems occurred after World War II and during a time when organisations were treated as self-contained entities (Bastedo, 2004). The open systems theory accommodates the insight of individuals, groups, and organisations as open systems which are occupied in continual communications within an environment (Van Eeden, 2010). The environmental influences of an open system are challenged by some organisations, while other organisations exert forces of economic, political, and social nature (Bastedo, 2004).

Supportive segregations from environmental diversities bear witness to the break down and collapse of internal and accurate decision-making structures where actions are formulated (Pondy & Mitroff, 1979). Organisations are likely to continue operating within an external environment where inputs from the environment are attained and transformed into outputs, and where the optimal functioning of the organisation is dependent on the invaluable output received in the form of feedback (Luthans, 2011). Feedback is reverted to the environment during the transformation process described above (Cummings & Worley, 2009) in turn generating considerable and positive influences upon modern-day organisational theory (Luthans, 2011). Major developments make it possible to observe the relationship between individuals, groups and organisations, as well as between the organisation and its environment. Thus, the open systems theory promotes an understanding of the internal dynamics within an organisation, including its interaction with its external environment (Fraher, 2004a). Open systems trigger long-term effects in support of determining abilities required to anticipate and manage environmental changes and to respond to such changes (Luthans, 2011). Organisations respond openly to areas

entailing client requirements, legal and political constraints, economic and technological advancements (Robbins *et al.*, 2009). The major theme surrounding open systems is the lack of focus of formal or informal structures as compared to the components that preserve the forward move of the organisation. An organisation is regarded as an open system only once it is able to progress towards organisational maturity and to withstand itself through a belief of interdependent resources and inputs (Alford, 2014). According to Fraher (2004a), the life of an organisation is affected by the socio-psychological premise on two levels, and is recommended that both factors must be studied thoroughly in order to completely understand organisations (Trist & Murray, 1993):

- socio-factors – influence the realness within the culture, policies and procedures of an organisation; and,
- psycho-factors – affect the fears, anxieties, values, hopes and beliefs of the individuals who work within the organisation (Fraher, 2004a).

2.2.3 Systemic boundaries

Within systems psychodynamics, a boundary is viewed as a psychosocial basis of grouped structures, which serve as a vital concept that is derived from the open systems theory interconnecting systems perspectives and psychoanalytic beliefs (Geldenhuys, 2012). The focus of boundaries entails working with organisations as systems of interrelated parts and connections between individuals (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012), and are further used to structure the system and regulate system transactions within the environment of the organisation in an effort to regulate what is suitable to a system and what is not (Geldenhuys, 2012). The environment involves other systems and systems that are either larger or smaller than organisations. Organisations and their subsystems carry the weight and burden of their environments, which are dealt with over the short, medium and long term (Van Tonder, 2014). Organisations and environments that are articulated within the general systems theory (Van Tonder, 2014) clearly isolate systems that maintain boundaries (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). Specifying boundaries in any organisation is difficult considering the multiple links and associations between functions

(subsystems) and various environments (Van Tonder, 2014). Boundaries are useful in identifying people, groups and organisations while continuously reforming and redefining those (Geldenhuys, 2012) and are regarded as arbitrary due to multiple subsystems where the boundary line for one subsystem varies from that of another (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Boundaries are visible borders and limits of systems that are categorised into physical, biological and mechanical systems (Cummings & Worley, 2009), and are considered problematic to demarcate into social systems, such as organisations (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972).

The identity, history and sense of purpose of an organisation assist in presenting the significance of organisational boundaries together with assistance from the organisation through organisational development (Millet, 1998). Defining boundaries seems to be an impossible task due to the continuous inflow and outflow (Cummings & Worley, 2009), and therefore boundaries are recognised from both a systems theory perspective and a psychoanalytical perspective (White, 2009). The purpose of establishing and maintaining boundaries assures that boundaries are geared toward assisting individuals and are not motivated by needs, gratifications or agendas (Luchner, Moser, Mirsalimi, & Jones, 2008). Boundaries that are compromised and not preserved lead to boundary transgressions, which exist on a continuum ranging from adaptive (ethical) to maladaptive (potentially unethical) (Luchner *et al.*, 2008). Within psychoanalysis, ego boundaries attempt to differentiate between individuals, their environment, group members, groups and organisations as shared parts of the total system functioning inside and across boundaries (Cilliers, 2000). Ego boundaries that operate inside and across boundaries (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000) are depicted through individuals and are based on a psychoanalytical perception (White, 2009). Strong-minded individuals are perceived as exhibiting firm boundaries while individuals with weak boundaries are characterised as vulnerable (White, 2009). Individuals are highly likely to display defensive actions and unworkable anxieties in situations where feelings of insecurity due to organisational changes are experienced (White, 2009).

According to Harrison and Singer (2014), Freud proclaims that healthy individuals maintain a balance in the function of the mind, which is in working harmony. Freud's vision of good mental health (see Harrison & Singer, 2014) is an individual who

possesses a balance of both thin and thick boundaries, each situated in different systems within the mind (Harrison & Singer, 2014). Individuals who exhibit firm boundaries feel a sense of belonging in the organisation whereas those who exhibit weak boundaries feel isolated from the organisation and are left feeling affected while sitting on the periphery (Rafaeli, 1996). Organisational boundaries formulate attempts to contain anxiety while maintaining controlled and pleasant working environments (Cilliers, 2000). Ineffective managing of boundaries often brings about intolerable anxieties in many employees (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). Anxiety is recognised as the forerunner of the blurring of boundaries between rational and irrational behaviour (Cilliers, 2012), and results in unpleasant feelings that are endured by individuals (Bovey & Hede, 2001). This kind of behaviour is accountable for the hurt that the system (individual, team or larger parts of the organisation) undergoes, and which is likely to lie in the nature of the (unconscious) group dynamics and in the organisational factors, such as culture, structure, processes and systems (Cilliers, 2012). Boundary group management contains three elements: time boundaries, space boundaries, and task boundaries (Cilliers, 2000, p.19).

- *Time boundaries* – assist in upholding the daily work routine, i.e. start, going home and meetings.
- *Space boundaries* – the physical work setting, such as the cabinet, the desk or office building. A lack of clear space boundaries within an open-plan office often leads to individual anxiety.
- *Task boundaries* – knowledge of what the work comprises. Anxiety is formed when individuals are unsure about what to do as illustrated in job descriptions (Cilliers, 2000).

Organisational and environmental boundaries are unique (Amagoh, 2008), and assist with differentiating between systems and their environments (Cummings & Worley, 2009). It is believed that systems retain boundaries, which are detached from the environment of the organisation (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). Systems theory perspectives bestow additional focus onto organisational boundaries (White, 2009), leaving boundaries at liberty to assist in understanding the distinctness between different systems (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). The different systems, such

as the open system, maintain permeable and dynamic boundaries (Emery, 2013) between itself and the broader supra-system (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). Systems are bound in specific ways where difficulties arise due to specificities of system boundaries in a means of gaining recognition (Cilliers, 2001; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2020). Conflicts within boundaries are therefore just as serious on the inside of the organisation as it is in the world outside of the organisation (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2020).

2.2.4 Systemic characteristics

The focus of systems thinking is directed at the basic principles of the organisation and not at the basic building blocks (Kaat & De Kroon, 2017). Systems thinking is known to be contextual, which means that it is placed into the context of a larger whole. Systems approach properties can be understood only from the organisation as a whole. The understanding of an organisation, from a systemic perspective, suggests positioning the organisation in a context where the nature of the relationship is authenticated, resulting in the understanding that the life of the organisation begins with the understanding of its patterns (Kaat & De Kroon, 2017). The aims of the systematic review are to:

- identify measures of organisational characteristics;
- describe the characteristics and psychometric properties of those measures; and
- provide recommendations to improve the measurement of characteristics in future studies (Allen, Towne, Maxwell, DiMartino, & Levya, 2017).

According to Marsick and Watkins (1999), successful organisations are described by the following characteristics:

- a core sense of identity and values;
- tolerance of unconventional thinking and of experimentation; and
- a financial policy that attracts resources to allow for flexibility.

Systemic characteristics are based on the need for reliable and valid assessment measures. Several organisational characteristics are identified by Kaat and De Kroon (2017):

- Organisations are focused on survival – they exist in service of the survival of the systems and its individuals.
- Every system is part of a bigger whole – every system serves the organisation from a holistic perspective.
- A system lives by permanent exchange – through the exchanging of products or services.
- The parts of a system are in service of the whole – each individual has a place in the bigger whole.
- The whole is more than the sum of its parts – the organisation includes factors such as the systems and its people.
- The parts display the properties of the whole – they represent understanding of the relationships between the parts of the system and how they fit into the whole, which permits deeper insights.
- Living systems self-regulate naturally – they maintain clear reasons for their being and include goals that allow for the continuance of life.
- Living systems understand the dynamic balance between preservation and exchange – focuses on specific goals like; supplying the market with a special service or product

2.2.5 Micro, macro and meso-systems

In (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011), Bronfenbrenner identifies the composition of the environment by dividing it into three systems: micro system, meso-system, and macro system. The interconnection between the micro, meso and macro systems indicates the interdependent relationship between all three systems, time and time again (Colchester, 2016). The micro systems consist of smaller functional units whereas meso-systems support the functioning of the micro system leaving the macro system to deal with strategic goals and operations of the organisation (Hollnagel, 2016).

Within the environment of the organisation, micro systems are regarded as a person or an individual (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011) whose work is determined upon activities which operate on a whole, activities that have clear beginnings and ends, and activities where the dependence on others are limited and information is concentrated within a specific work environment (Hollnagel, 2016). Lower levels within an organisation are also known as micro systems and comprise fundamental parts (Colchester, 2016), which relate to the individual levels of the organisation (Jeurissen, 1997). It is recommended that micro systems should not be managed in isolation due to the horizontal couplings to other micro systems and vertical couplings to the meso and macro systems (Hollnagel, 2016). The term meso-systems refers to groups, families and friends (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011) as well as the various organisational levels, structures and cultures (Jeurissen, 1997). Macro systems are broader ideologies that are expressed and modelled through larger sociocultural groups (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011), and include institutions, the market, government and cultural traditions (Jeurissen, 1997). It is suggested that the macro system should be divided into micro and meso subsystems, since the work of a macro system is scattered, and entails isolated and loosely connected activities. Dependency on others is considerable, and information is dispersed within a generic working environment (Hollnagel, 2016).

2.3 THE INDIVIDUAL AS A MICRO SYSTEM

Micro systems based within organisational environments are referred to as a person, an individual or a worker. An individual level formed on one level forms a whole on another level owing to interdependencies (Colchester, 2016) in which a worker as a micro system approaches the organisation with dissatisfied conscious and unconscious family-oriented needs in an attempt to satisfy these needs in the organisation (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Micro systems are defined as –

[P]atterns of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by developing persons within a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features, containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality and systems of belief (Härkönen, 2007, p.19).

Micro systems are considered well-known and focused systems within organisations and consist of messages, interpretations and conversations between and amongst organisational members (Barbour, 2017). When the focus of analysis is toward individuals (Barbour, 2017) who continue to supervise supply and demand constraints (Colchester, 2016) while governing micro systems (Jeurissen, 1997) then the actions of the micro system are solely based on the individuals and their agendas (Colchester, 2016). Micro systems comprise people and functionings within their living environments and are regarded as the first level of influence (Kaat & De Kroon, 2017).

Living environments involve individuals and organisations with whom and where intimate and frequent contact occurs, such as parents, families and friends (Kaat & De Kroon, 2017) and where experiences with meaningful individuals develop and operate at an unconscious level (May, Cilliers, & Coetzee, 2012). This experience is termed 'intrapsychic reality' where the intrapsychic world of an individual forms an integral part of the micro system (May *et al.*, 2012). Family and other childhood relationships contribute towards the influential functioning of an individual's internal reality and brings forth traditional limitations that are accompanied with individualistic and painful restrictions towards the unprotected consciousness of the individual (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). Entrance into organisations takes place as a result of unfulfilled and unconscious family needs, which individuals desire to fulfil within the organisation, owing to internal psychic reality (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). An intrapsychic reality allows individuals the opportunity to make sense of the external reality from an unconscious perspective (May *et al.*, 2012) by fulfilling desires (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). Since micro systems are regarded as the first level of influence within organisations (Kaat & De Kroon, 2017), fulfilling an individual's desires eventually results in individuals not being able to fit into the realness of the organisation (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). This brings forth feelings of confusion and anxiety, and results in the use of defence mechanisms, such as splitting, introjection, projection and projective identification (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002).

2.3.1 Psychodynamic perspectives on personality structure

An individual's psychodynamics assists in understanding how and why such an individual behaves in certain ways by applying psychoanalytical concepts to the conscious and unconscious aspects of the relationship among employees and between employees and management (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994).

2.3.1.1 The unconsciousness and consciousness in personality

Freud's understanding of the mind rests on a three-level system of awareness: the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious (Bergh, Theron, Werner, Ngokha, & May, 2009).

These three levels of awareness according to Freud are explained follows:

- *The consciousness* – is the small and limited aspect of an individual's personality. It comprises thoughts, memories, sensations and experiences of which the individual is aware at any given moment.
- *The preconscious* – is referred to as the 'available memory', implying that the individual's experiences are not readily available, but easily accessible.
- *The unconsciousness* – holds higher importance as compared to the conscious and preconscious awareness, and refers to hurtful and harmful memories, emotions and instincts harboured in the unconscious mind. Experiences are not easily accessible despite the unconscious awareness being the largest part of the mind (Bergh *et al.*, 2009).

Freud uses the iceberg model to simplify the three levels of awareness:

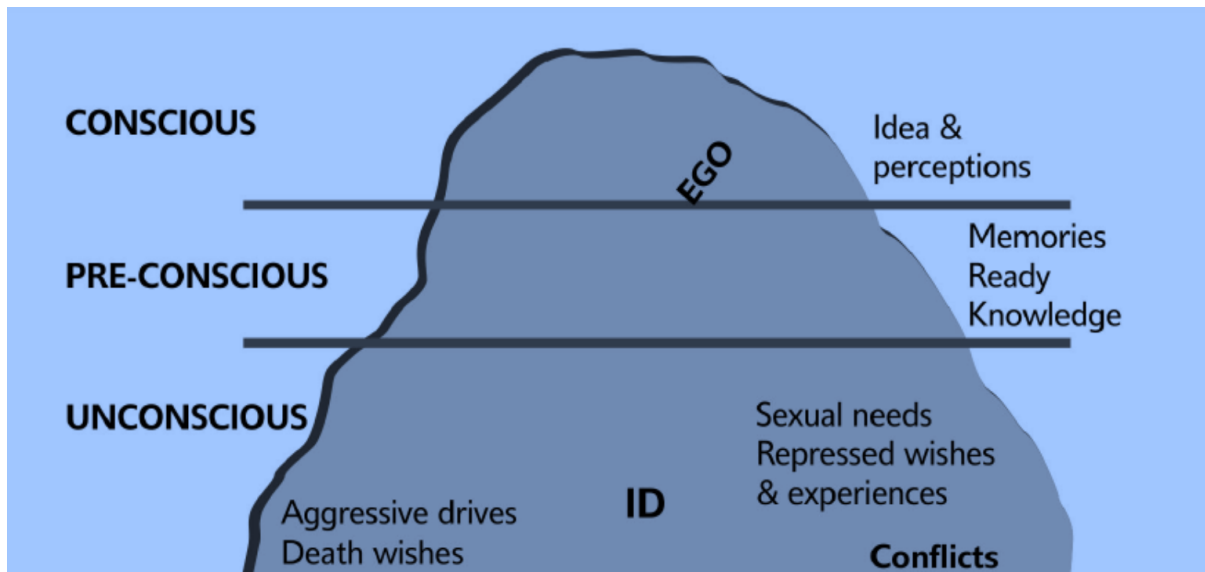


Figure 1.1. The levels and structures of consciousness

Adapted from: (May et al., 2012, p.19)

In the figure above –

- *Conscious (above surface of the water)* – contains information that requires mindfulness.
- *Preconscious (bridge between the conscious and unconscious mind)* – contains accessible information that is not always available.
- *Unconscious (part underneath the surface of the water)* – filled with feelings of unawareness, such as anxieties (May et al., 2012).

2.3.1.2 The structure of personality

In Fig 1.2, the structure and process of personality is indicated using the three levels of conscious awareness, namely; id, ego and superego. In this figure, the area above the surface of the water indicates the conscious awareness that an individual has, the surface beneath the water is known as the unconscious which emanates the anxieties and feelings that an individual has which they are not aware of. The preconscious is the connection that fills the gap between the conscious and unconscious levels and includes information that is not always available to individuals (May et al., 2012).



Figure 1.2. Three levels of conscious awareness

Adapted from: (May et al., 2012, p.18)

The structure and consciousness of an individual's personality is controlled by the id, ego and superego leading to distinct differences between people (May *et al.*, 2012). The id is active on the unconscious level and in harmony with the pleasure principle, which is responsible for paving the way towards the understanding and unconsciousness of why people behave in certain ways. Unconsciousness is due to the id, ego and superego as well as behaviour-driven structures in which the superego remains active on all three levels of awareness and in agreement with the moralistic principle (Reppen, 1985). The ego is active on the preconscious and unconscious levels, in unity with the reality principle (May *et al.*, 2012), and it acknowledges developments from which the id initially began (Peled & Geva, 1999). The id is identified with being a disorganised system, which consists of strange and disassociated concepts (Peled & Geva, 1999) whereas the ego is responsible for resolving conflicts between the id and the superego, which are oppositional to each

other in light of alleviating individuals from attracting too much trouble (May *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.1.3 Anxiety and defence mechanisms

According to Freud (1966), anxiety is as a result of transformations of accumulated tensions. Anxiety is brought upon by a libidinal impulse, which is derived in the unconscious, repressed by the preconscious, and a reaction to dangerous situations (Freud, 1966). Anxiety is a dominant and controlled force of emotion, which claims a privileged position in the study of psychoanalysis (Gabriel, 1998). It is however not an out-and-out emotion but rather an expression of the mental and somatic activation of anticipatory defence mechanisms (Perna, 2013). Anxiety is often experienced as an unwanted and emotive product channelling all expelled emotions, such as love, hate, anger and jealousy (Gabriel, 1998). Avoiding anxiety shoulders consequences in shaping the nature of systems, including the culture, structure and leadership of systems (Geldenhuys, 2012). As an important construct of systems psychodynamics, anxiety is established on the basis of systematic behaviour, in both group and organisational behaviour (Van Eeden & Cilliers, 2009). The forms of anxiety that individuals are unable to prevent from entering their conscious minds are regarded as some of the most important constructs of systems psychodynamics (Van Eeden & Cilliers, 2009).

Some forms of anxieties as identified by Steyn and Cilliers (2016) are:

- *Performance anxiety* – assuming that one's self-worth is lower than what is expected at the time.
- *Persecutory anxiety arising from the nature of work* – experiencing the organisation as dangerous, angry, hostile, intimidating and oppressive.
- *Survival anxiety* – assuming that existence is threatened.
- *Paranoid-schizoid position* – assuming that one has potentially dangerous and harmful enemies.
- *Depressive position* – integrating the good and bad parts of a system into a whole object while rejecting the idea in an idealised object. The system then possesses its own real behaviour and repairs its objects and human relations.

Freud's belief of anxiety is applicable to work situations and the deep-rooted causes of dysfunctional relationships in organisations (Bergh *et al.*, 2009). Emotions are ignited by feelings in which sadness generates anger (Gabriel, 1998). These continuous loop effects are witness to the experiences of good and bad feelings arising from anxiety (Gabriel, 1998), which enable employees to conceal anxiety far away from the conscious mind due to the minds unpleasant methods of coping (Geldenhuys, 2012). Individuals are unconsciously accustomed to using well-developed defence mechanisms to safeguard themselves from change and from feelings resulting in anxiety (Bovey & Hede, 2001). Defence mechanisms, either adaptive or maladaptive, are used to address anxiety in situations when systems (individual, group or organisation) unconsciously need something or someone to contain anxiety (Rosen, 2008). A defence is an alternative method of adapting strategies, and is seen as critical when investigating how people deal with stress (Cramer, 2000). Defence mechanisms describe and explain adaptive and maladaptive behaviour (Bovey & Hede, 2001) when attempting to neutralise anxiety due to the resistance of change within organisations (Bergh *et al.*, 2009). Defence mechanisms confirm assurances of safety and acceptance in organisations (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000) and emphasises a sense of safety, security and acceptance within the organisation while averting pain (Cilliers, Rothmann, & Struwig, 2004). Defence mechanisms assure assistance with the coping of situations and objects and toward individuals who pose a danger to the mental, physical or relational safety of individuals (Perna, 2013). Two features that are maintained by defence mechanisms:

- individuals operate on an unconscious level when making use of defences which leave them feeling unaware; and
- reality is distorted, which makes it less intimidating (Bergh *et al.*, 2009).

The purpose of defence mechanisms is to focus on serving and addressing anxiety in various ways. Defence mechanisms are responsible for lessening anxiety, offering protection and increasing the self-esteem of individuals (Bovey & Hede, 2001). Individuals who operate at an unconscious level tend to remain unaware of the functions of defence mechanisms (Cramer, 2009). Defence mechanisms retain an

overt behaviour pattern, which is aimed at influencing and inspiring others and is titled “covert cognitive manipulations” (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992, p.612). Individuals are persuaded into increasing awareness by appropriately evaluating behaviour towards others to expand on a greater understanding of what they idealise within themselves and what they denigrate in others, or what they denigrate within themselves and idealise in others, resulting in individualistic analytical awareness to illuminate the effect on experiences (May *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.2 Psychodynamic perspectives on personality

During the 1930s, Anna Freud (Sigmund Freud’s daughter) and her psychoanalyst followers devoted time and attention towards discovering how individuals, from a psychological level, survived anxiety. Anna and her followers found that anxiety is not negative in all situations, and that it is indeed the mind, which serves as a manipulating factor in an attempt to control and protect individuals from anxiety (Rosen, 2008). Anxiety, through its adaptive defences, such as humour and sublimation, is channelled towards productive activities, such as sport, art and music, whereas anxiety through maladaptive defences observes breaks from reality and paths to pathology (Rosen, 2008). Formulated defence mechanisms are successfully applied in organisations (Bergh *et al.*, 2009) and are discussed below.

2.3.2.1 Splitting

Splitting divides external objects, such as people, and splits them into good and bad within the mind, while holding more onto good than the bad (Geldenhuys, 2012) with shifts from one extreme to the next (Bowins, 2004). Contradictory methods are welcomed when individuals control their anguish through a split between realities into two separate entities, which is a powerful strategy in triangulation competition (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992). Splitting, in the past, was regarded as a controversial matter due to its idealisation of a few people while others were disparaged (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992) and thus the act of splitting separates the intrapsychic reality (unconscious) of an individual and the external reality of an individual (daily context) into good and bad (May *et al.*, 2012). Separation is responsible for placing the exact emotions into the precise baskets of love, hate, acceptable and unacceptable (May *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.2.2 Projection

Projection arises from external concepts rather than internal concepts, but in truth is the projector's own projections (Bowins, 2004). During projection, individuals eject split feelings and thoughts about the external world (Geldenhuys, 2012). Adverse aspects relating to others are owed to attitudes of prejudice, rejection and externalisation of oneself in a negative manner (May *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.2.3 Introjection

Introjection is an unconscious and recognisable interpersonal interaction where recipients identify with emotions projected towards them (May *et al.*, 2012) and is found when individuals encounter others not as they are but as they need those to be in order for them to role play in the internal drama of others (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). Introjection occurs when an individual take ideals, behaviours and individualities into him- or herself (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992). According to Nesse and Lloyd (1992), children form a pattern where they identify with their parents and introject the norms and beliefs of their parents into their own personality resulting in the continuance and spreading of cultures and this usually occurs with a person who they admire, (May *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.2.4 Projective identification

Projective identification is an unconscious and interpersonal interaction (May *et al.*, 2012), which is used as a psychological defence against unwanted feelings (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). Individuals split off and project intolerable feelings onto an unconscious and willing recipient. The willing recipient then projects behaviour because of affected emotions known to the individual (May *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.2.5 Displacement

Displacement refers to experiences, which are used to explain socio-psychological phenomena. It is an intrapsychic act, in which negative feelings and thoughts are redirected from the original source of the anxiety, thoughts or feelings to a person or

object that is less threatening (Bergh et al, 2009). Displacement allows for the focus of attention to be moved from an unacceptable person or object to a more safer and acceptable person or object (Bowins, 2004).

2.3.2.6 Rationalisation

Rationalisation is an act to falsify unacceptable behaviour (Bergh *et al.*, 2009), through plausible and manipulative explanations and excuses in order to maintain relationships (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992). Rationalisation is a form of denial whereby events are recognised, but their importance and meaning are denied. Rationalisation is where individuals attempt to retain self-respect and to evade guilt over something they may have done wrong. Rationalisation is not harmful and creates alternative justifications that produce distractions away from truthful motives, but the continuance of making excuses may lead to destructive and dangerous behaviour (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992).

2.3.2.7 Denial

Denial is a negation of acceptable thoughts, feelings and actions (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992), which are consummated by attaching negative thoughts to a perception, thought or feeling. In this way, thwarted thoughts are inaccurately perceived, ignored or misrepresented (Cramer, 2009).

2.3.2.8 Sublimation

Sublimation is undesirable thoughts that are channelled into acceptable outlets (Bergh *et al.*, 2009). Sublimation signifies the displacement of meaning when once feelings are redirected, the partiality of the undesirable thoughts is achieved and anxiety is reduced (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992).

2.3.2.9 Identification

Identification is an individual's emulation of making a change within him- or herself by connecting to a person he or she admires (Cramer, 2009). By doing this,

individuals shield and protect themselves from threatening and adverse thoughts and feelings (Bergh *et al.*, 2009).

2.3.2.10 Intellectualisation

Intellectualisation reiterates events in an intellectual manner while mimicking emotions (Bergh *et al.*, 2009). Individuals avoid uncomfortable emotions by focusing on facts which are accredited for during lucid communications where outbursts of anger or pleasure are suppressed and considered irrelevant (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992).

2.3.2.11 Regression

Regression is the reversion to earlier patterns of behaviour. Regressive experiences in children are brought upon by traumatic events and stress during childhood (Bergh *et al.*, 2009). During times of stress, children may revert to old habits such as temper tantrums or frustrations. Individuals may resort to deceptive manipulation techniques when in need of aid (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992). However, most individuals regress to a time when their lives felt safer than their current living situations (Bergh *et al.*, 2009).

2.3.2.12 Identification with aggressor

Identification with the aggressor permits individuals or the victim to feel the need to be exploited and abused by the aggressor through the psychological welcoming of danger into their lives in order to save their life. The victim displays an attitude of admiration and gratitude towards the aggressor (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992).

2.3.2.13 Transference and counter-transference

Transference and counter-transference are essential tools for the psychoanalytical study of organisations (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003). Transference transfers feelings dealing with one relationship onto another. The psychoanalytical conceptualisation accentuates the significance of early childhood relationships in shaping feelings about people later on in life. Strong feelings from adult relationships originated upon

the expectations based on transference and not from current circumstances resulting in distorted realities (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992).

Counter-transference refers to specific reactions towards the transference of clients, and operates in more or less the same way that transferences do. Counter-transference begins when the approach and outlook of the therapist towards the client is affected by the transference of the client onto the therapist which leads to the life of the therapist being transferred onto the client inevitably conceiving a distorted analytical understanding (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003). The therapist tends to behave in a defensive manner in accordance with his or her own needs and his or her perception of the client is distorted in ways that lead to exhibiting poor judgement (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003). On the other hand, therapists gain a deepened awareness of relational dynamics by providing clients with valuable information (Hayes *et al.*, 1998). According to Hayes *et al.* (1998), counter-transference was first introduced by Freud, and is observed as having uniformly adverse effects on therapy, meanwhile retaining Freud's notion that counter-transference is conflict-based and strictly unlimited to conscious reactions or to those solely in response to the client's transference.

2.3.3 Psychodynamic perspectives in the work and the workplace

The input of psychoanalysis is deeply rooted in understanding group processes and its functioning mechanisms within organisations and societies. The mental world of employees is deepened by inter- and intrapsychic experiences that are explained by psychoanalytical theories (Barabasz, 2016). Many workplace occurrences that exist outside of the immediate understanding of organisational participants are continuously overlooked and taken for granted. The organisation's psychoanalytical consultants accept responsibility when acknowledging distractions based on one's involvement in work-life, which frequently incorporates the 'hard to detect' and questions the defences of individuals, groups and organisations (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003). Work is perceived from two approaches: as a painful encumbrance (in tasks that need to be performed), and as a congenial activity (in the results). Work is questioned as to why it is painful and avoidable on the one hand and pleasurable on the other hand (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000).

The answer is found in the renunciation of instincts whereby the reality principle precedes the pleasure principle and welcomes the alleviation of painful situations to be avoided altogether in the workplace (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). Thus, employees may rarely receive favourable moments to acquire pleasures connected to accomplishments because of the inability to defer gratification or the inability to endure necessary sufferings. Organisational and team behaviour, which is studied from a systems psychodynamic perspective, reveals that the organisation is based upon its own existent system, both conscious and unconscious, which includes subsystems that connect and mirror one another (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). Employees, who are individualistically part of micro systems, confront work situations with unfulfilled consciousness and unconscious family-oriented needs that appear to be fulfilled within work situations. Employees are highly likely to project unfulfilled affections and parental recognition toward managers or to those representing male and female authority (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000).

2.3.3.1 Employee engagement to disengagement

Disengaged employees are the cancers in any organisation due to continual displays of unhappiness, which incessantly discourage the triumphs of co-workers, monopolises managers, boast an increase in quality defects and contribute to shrinkages, such as being typically sick, foregoing work days and increasing numbers in employee turnover as they undo what engaged employees attempt to do (Pillai, 2013). Employee engagement is defined as the employee's aim toward cognitive, emotional and behavioural energy, which results in a positive organisational outcome (Shuck & Reio, 2014). The aim of engaged employees is to develop organisations, and to remain involved, passionate and psychologically committed to work. They are motivated by being treated respectfully, through engaging in reflecting personal values, and by showing a keen interest in the emotions of the management of the organisation (Pillai, 2013). Employee engagement is further defined as the connection organisational members have with work roles, the positive emotions encompassed in work experiences, personal meaningfulness, manageable workload and maintaining hope in future work prospects (Attridge, 2009).

Employee engagement is a constituent of happiness, and is looked upon as an eminent psychological goal that delivers three channels to happiness, namely pleasure, engagement and meaning. It demands that individuals pursue gratification by harnessing their strengths (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010). Employee engagement results in positive individual outcomes based on the quality of an employee's work and employees' own individual experiences of doing work and organisational outcomes based on the expansion and productivity within organisations (Ram & Prabhakar, 2011). Engaged employees are productive, positive thinkers, they interrelate well with co-workers, stakeholders and clients and they are motivated enough to remain with their organisation or current employers. Employee engagement is a positive and fulfilling, work-related state of mind categorised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010). **Vigour** elevates bouts of energy and mental buoyancy when working and capitalising on one's own work. **Dedication** stems from a sense of significance from one's own work, and involves feelings of gratification and inspiration. **Absorption** is the absolute happiness in one's own work and the non-detachment from it (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010).

A serious concern regarding employee engagement is the lack of understanding of psychology in employee relations. A psychodynamic approach towards employee engagement is aimed at expanding the understanding of employee needs and desires in order to address employee engagement (St. Clair, 2000).

2.3.3.2 Employee well-being

An employee's well-being is based upon the attitudes and feelings that such employee has about him- or herself regarding his or her work (Bergh *et al.*, 2009). Well-being reflects the contributions that an employee makes towards an improved quality of life and is defined as a conscious and intentional approach towards an advanced state of physical, psychological and spiritual health (Sieberhagen, Pienaar, & Els, 2011). Mentally imprisoned employees within negative and psychologically draining organisations experience negative emotions and rarely experience any positive emotions (Shuck & Reio, 2014). Employees who feel abused and taken for granted are less likely to experience positive emotions as compared to those who are not abused or taken for granted and they instead experience a lack of peer and

managerial support. The limitations in organisational resources challenge the organisation and its members; hence, employees encounter spirals of downward trajectories emanating from emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation of work-related tasks and negative views of psychological well-being (Shuck & Reio, 2014).

Employees in positive work environments inevitably express positivity and find a sense of personal accomplishment (Shuck & Reio, 2014). Organisations benefit from supporting their employees by initiating employee wellness programmes. Employees hope to gain an increase in mental wellness, energy, resilience, life and job satisfaction with a reduction in stress and mental health (Sieberhagen *et al.*, 2011). The Wheel of Wellness model (see Bergh *et al.*, 2009) is a theoretical, interdisciplinary and holistic model whose duty is to assist organisations with the promotion of employee well-being. The model proposes five life tasks (spirituality, work and leisure, friendship, love and self-direction), which are interrelated, interconnected and related to properties of healthy, optimal functioning (Bergh *et al.*, 2009).

In relation to systems psychodynamics, employee well-being is a unique experience that each employee undergoes where some are able to cope mentally, physically and emotionally while others are only able to cope physically (Cilliers & Flotman, 2016). The following dimensions are listed as relevant to the employee well-being model:

- aspects of the self – intrapersonal, affective or cognitive behaviour, spirituality and personal growth; and
- other domains of life – interpersonal, social and contextual in love, life and work in which the self-manifests itself (Gropp, Geldenhuys, & Visser, 2007).

2.3.3.3 Subjective well-being

According to Cotton (2013), there is an undoubtable confusion regarding the takeover that mental health has on workplace well-being. Employees working within toxic environments are subject to physical and psychological illness. From a

scientific perspective, illnesses accentuate the mind–body split and inevitably cause chaos in respect of mental health and employment relations (Cotton, 2013). Subjective well-being is defined as the cognitive and affective assessments of an individual's life (Proctor, 2014). Subjective well-being is regarded as a positive approach to mental health and is categorised into two factors:

- emotional well-being – refers to an individual's assessment of his or her happiness and life satisfactions, including the ratio of positive affect over negative affect indicating the individual's emotional well-being; and
- positive psychological and social functioning – associated with aspects of a person's subjective experience and evaluation of the quality of life and the quality of emotional, psychological and social well-being. This includes measures of self-acceptance, positive interpersonal relations, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery and autonomy (Bergh *et al.*, 2009).

Psychodynamic approaches to subjective well-being or positive emotions are aimed at shaping personal resources as well as fuelling psychological resistance and well-being over time (Joshani, 2019).

2.3.3.4 Mindfulness

There is minimal research allocated to mindfulness with regard to its importance and the effects of performance relating to the work duties of employees. Mindfulness is regarded as a state of consciousness, and not as a quality that is possessed by some and lacked by others. Individuals experiencing mindfulness are in the here and now, or in the moment, and permit their attention to focus on present-moment occurrences (Dane, 2011). According to Dane (2011), mindfulness is associated with absorption and is a core component of job engagement, where individuals become deeply attentive to and engaged with particular roles, activities or tasks. The association between mindfulness and task performances is not perceived as an indisputable benefit or as a definite obligation but instead as a state of consciousness, that nurtures or hinders task performance as a function of certain conditions (Dane, 2011). Individuals who are recognised for possessing scarce and

unique skills strive to focus their attention mindfully when engaged in dynamic environments. Expert managers who remain in the here and now are known to focus their attention directly on the present moment in order to achieve higher performances regarding a range of tasks that indicate the powerful art and effect of mindfulness (Dane, 2011).

Mindfulness and acceptance-based approaches to psychodynamics emphasise acceptance, compassion and overt behavioural changes as a means for developing well-being and life satisfaction (Stewart, 2014).

2.4 THE GROUP AS A MESO-SYSTEM

Meso-systems support the performances of organisations in an attempt to support the work of micro systems (Bergh *et al.*, 2009). Bronfenbrenner (1993, cited in Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009), explains that meso-systems are based on the interrelations between groups of people, within micro systems. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998, cited in Tudge *et al.*, 2009) further states that meso-systems are dedicated to devoting time based on the extent to which activities and interactions occur consistently during the development of group or individual environments. Within organisations, groups are defined as united teams of individuals sharing a common interest, characteristics, bonds and activities that influence one another (Bergh *et al.*, 2009) toward achieving organisational goals (Robbins *et al.*, 2009). Groups operate on two levels:

- sophisticated work group level – oriented towards overt task completion; and
- basic assumption level – supports overt tasks by acting out projections, but often poses as a hindrance (Geldenhuys, 2012).

Detecting unconscious impetuses underline work-related behaviour and predict difficulties leading to problems raised and tackled on a group level and within short-term interventions (Adler, 2009). This allows for the revelation of several issues and experiences perceived as dangerous and viewed as inappropriate for office discussion. Due to time inefficiencies, pressures and further aggravation towards

existing tensions occur in groups being worse off than what they once were (Adler, 2009). Work groups that are mature by nature possess the ability to resolve internal conflicts, mobilise their resources, and take decisive and intelligent decisions and actions (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002).

The following constructs are discussed as part of the group as a meso-system. Object relations theory (see Townley, 2008) provides an interpersonal viewpoint on psychoanalysis, and recognises that people are prone to relationships from birth, mostly with their mothers (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012). Basic assumptions by Bion (2003, cited in Cilliers & Stone, 2005) are considered the cornerstone for studying relationships in the organisational systems since they address the behaviour of the individual, group (meso) and organisation (Cilliers, 2000) as well as present specialised problematic dynamics, which is used by consultants to enhance work group development (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Work groups play a role because of the following contributions:

- they shape organisational roles through group-level forces;
- individuals are portrayed as group representatives – intentionally or unintentionally; and
- unconscious processes within individuals and groups and between groups create an effect on an individual's roles, on intragroup dynamics and on relations and organisational relations (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002).

2.4.1 Object relations theory

In the systems psychodynamics language, the term 'object' relates to a person due to the relationship between the initial focus of the intra-personnel dynamics of the self-subject to the external relationship, which is the primary caregiver of the other-object (VanKatwyk, 2003). Objects experience ease in relating to a lived experience (Churchill, 2018), and according to Fraher (2004b), Melanie Klein's (1946) object relations theory illuminates how the experiences in groups elicit primitive phantasies where beginnings start during the initial years of life. Object relations theory (Klein, 1975) is founded upon the relationship that originates between the infant and its

mother while discarding any focus related to individualistic and subjective relationships (Fraher, 2004b). Infants internalise relationships, including a self-representation in relation to object-representation of the mother and their emotional linkages (VanKatwyk, 2003). Object relations theory describes the development of experienced and relational associations, which are used to decipher the possibility of problematic relationship behaviour founded during the first few years of life, and which is likely to impair any future relationships in love and work (Kiley *et al.*, 2015). The concept of the object relations theory extends to the belief that object relatedness is an essential and vital human need, which influences personality in its efforts to socialise with other people (Kiley *et al.*, 2015). Positive experiences relate to good object relations, and connects the self (care-receiving infant), receives positive experiences from the object (an attentive provider), and receives positive emotional experiences (satisfaction comfort) as an amalgamation of good and bad contrasting experiences (VanKatwyk, 2003). Klein's (1975) analogy, that illustrates the infant being infused with its mother's breast, is descriptive of unconscious fears, which are exhibited by an individual in respect of the desire to join a particular group. This desire is both comforting and distressing, and the individual is left to experience the fear of becoming incredulous or be devoured by the group or instead be completely rejected and abandoned by the group (Fraher, 2004b).

2.4.2 Bion's theory on groups

Group relations theory (see Hayden & Molenkamp, 2003) is defined as the holistic examining of groups as a social system using systems psychodynamics principles (Fraher, 2004b). Group relations theory is the second component of systems psychodynamics (Fraher, 2004b), and according to Geldenhuys (2012), was theoretically developed by Bion after his observation of group behaviour. Research regarding experiential group methods and the development of therapeutic communities paved the way for group relations theory (Fraher, 2004b). Group-as-a-whole behaviour refers to the behaviour of groups as a social system and the manner in which individuals relate to the system (Cilliers & Stone, 2005). The drive away from an individual's psychoanalytical perspective to a group perspective, as a single unit, signifies a momentous milestone in the history of group relations and the study of systems psychodynamics (Fraher, 2004b). Bion (1961) abandoned his

psychoanalytical perspectives to form part of the group-as-a-whole perspective by using the 'outsider-within' perspective (see Fraher, 2004b) in an effort to promote the history of group relations (Fraher, 2004b). Bion used himself as a channel to discover group behaviour and found newer ways of working within groups (Fraher, 2004b). Bion's (2003) theory constitutes a group development theory that is focused on the paranoid-schizoid position (the negative) and the depressive position (the positive), including psychotic anxiety and defence mechanism concepts (Cilliers *et al.*, 2004). Bion's group relational theory and practices were strongly influenced by systems psychodynamics (Geldenhuys, 2012) according to which group relations are observed from a holistic perspective (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). A holistic view of group relations emphasises experiences and contributions of groups as sources of information expressing elements of group-as-a-whole behaviour (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). In accordance with systems psychodynamics literature, group relational theory encompasses unspoken and unconscious agreements that bind group members and their interactions together (Geldenhuys, 2012). Group members continuously maintain interdependent relationships with each other as the trust in one member brings forth quandaries for which the whole group vouches to take responsibility (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). The groundwork of the group relations theory is indebted to the group-as-a-whole perspective, the exploitation of one's individual self as a mechanism, and techniques of experiential learning (Fraher, 2004b).

Bion (1961) distinguished between two groups, the basic assumption group and the work group.

2.4.2.1 The basic assumption group

The formulation of Bion's (1961) basic assumptions is viewed from a systems psychodynamics perspective, and forms the cornerstone of group relations training (Cilliers *et al.*, 2004). The intention of Bion's (1961) basic assumptions is to be studied and directed towards individuals (micro system), groups (meso-system) and organisations (macro system) (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000) in an attempt to offer solutions to organisational problems in order to promote group development (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). The concerns of basic assumptions posit a true reflection

of group behaviour and are displayed as true, valid, real and vital to the survival of the group (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). Bion (1961) describes 'basic' as the motivation for survival within groups, whereas 'assumption' speaks to the collective projection of groups as its basis, rather than the reality (Geldenhuys, 2012). According to Hendrikz (1999), only one assumption can be held at any one time, and can usually last for ten minutes or ten weeks. Two characteristics of the basic assumption mentality identified by (Bion, 1961) are:

- Time plays no part in it – time is regarded as a mental dysfunction but is not recognised. Time-based activities bring forth feelings of persecution, are imperfectly comprehended, and welcome distorted relationships to time.
- Absence of any process development – stimuli to development bring forth hostile responses. This process holds high importance, especially in the promotion of therapeutic development of insight.

There are three basic assumptions of group relations theory as suggested by Bion (1961): dependency, pairing, and fight-flight. Bion's (1961) basic assumptions explain the dynamics between individual (the micro system), group (the meso-system) and organisational behaviour (the macro system). These assumptions form the cornerstone of psychodynamic group work (Bion, 1961). At a later stage, a fourth assumption, 'one-ness', was added to Bion's (1961) list (Hendrikz, 1999), introducing two more assumptions during the 1990s 'me-ness' and 'we-ness' (Cilliers, 2003a). These assumptions are discussed below:

a. Basic assumption dependence (baD)

On the level of group functioning, group members are dependent on receiving protection and attention from authority figures (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). Groups merge with projected feelings of helplessness, inadequacy, neediness and fear from the external world (Kets de Vries, Florent-Treacy, & Korotov, 2013). The members of the group are unconsciously channelled into not knowing what to do, waiting around, and into inessentially needing things (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). Unconscious experiences are associated with a child within a family who unconsciously and

imaginatively projects dependence upon parental figures (Cilliers, 2000). Just as a child experiences negative tendencies, groups experience states of group disempowerment and helplessness (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Feelings of powerlessness and frustrations are felt when needs are not met. Groups are likely to experience anxiety and insecurity indicating levels of work and emotional immaturity (Cilliers, 2000), resulting in reactions based on hostility and rejection when the required attention is not received from authority figures, often leading to uncontained and explosive situations (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Defences result in unfortunate manipulations of the authority figure out of his or her role (Cilliers, 2000). At a later stage, groups develop through independence and interdependence indicating clear signs of maturity and wisdom (Cilliers, 2003a). The underlying fantasies in this assumption are based on the idea that “we will be safe and cared for” (Cilliers, 2000, p.19) which results in a lack of learning or in work that has not yet been accomplished since the group continues to defend themselves blindly from reality (Hendrikz, 1999).

b. Basic assumption pairing (baP)

Group members believe that in coping with feelings of anxiety, alienation and loneliness they should ‘pair up’ with people who are perceived as powerful (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013). In this case, groups tend to display an unconscious need to feel secure (Cilliers, 2000) and attempt to form powerful relationships against perceived authority figures or aggressors (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Bion found that the pairing relationship is generally sexual, but not necessarily subjected to male and female (Hendrikz, 1999) and embodies the bond between two individuals who express warm affections leading to ultimate intimacy and closeness (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Pairs provide each other with mutual support but create isolation towards the rest of the group members. Groups believe that survival is based upon reproduction (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002) and relief is gained from the birth of a messiah into the group, which relieves group members from anxieties and fears (Hendrikz, 1999). Pairing is deemed a pleasant ray of hope (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002) coinciding with the splitting of race groups, males and females, and old and new from each other. Groups are likely to attract a sense of belonging and security by splitting the whole in order to build smaller systems (Cilliers, 2000) resulting in

intra- and inter-group conflict within groups (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013). Unconscious fantasies within the pairing assumption assume that formation will take place in pairs (Cilliers, 2000). Groups that are continually obscured by pairing preconceptions against reality discover that tasks are unfortunately not performed effectively and efficiently (Hendrikz, 1999).

c. Basic assumption fight–flight (baF)

This assumption is related to feelings of danger and fear felt within groups regarding the organisational world and the fight for survival (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013) and is used when groups encounter feelings of discomfort (Cilliers, 2003a). Groups acknowledge full awareness of reality as it happens, in the here and now, and entrust power upon the leader as the person responsible for guiding and protecting them against perceived enemies and threats. Reflections are made dating back to the Stone Age where cavemen made choices by either fighting or fleeing threats at any instant (Hendrikz, 1999). The choices are either to fight or to use aggression, scapegoating and physical attack (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002) against the self, colleagues or authority figures. Reactions accompany feelings of envy, jealousy, competition, elimination, boycotting, rivalry, privileged relationships and fighting for a position in the group (Cilliers, 2003a). Individuals who manage to restore peace towards aggressive forces are granted the opportunity for leadership, whereas constant bickering and fighting brings about a series of unfortunate, hostile and short-lived leadership roles (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). Individuals choosing to flee from enemies choose to react physically by avoiding others, being ill, resigning from groups or organisations, and being withdrawn and passive (Cilliers, 2000).

An unconscious fantasy in this assumption indicates the impossibility to eliminate the reality. Frustrations occur when difficulties arise between conscious fantasy and subconscious truth. Handling frustrations permit groups to confront the reality of a threat-less enemy (Hendrikz, 1999). The fight–flight assumption is promoted by leaders to assist groups nonetheless in channelling their anxiety outwards. Once the identities of groups have been restored, members who once felt lost regain meaning and continue to promote assurance and unity within groups. Leaders unfortunately

continue to deal with an increase in dependency within groups (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013).

d. Basic assumption we-ness (baW)

The we-ness assumption views individuals as members of a powerful movement, in search of survival (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). This assumption assists individuals in creating feelings of '*simunye*', (*simunye* is a Zulu word meaning: we are one), in dealing with the unknown where well-manifested synergies act as secret desires of the group (Hendrikz, 1999) enhancing their feelings of existence, well-being and wholeness (Cilliers & Greyvenstein, 2012). Regardless of group commitment, groups are prone to misplace individualistic tendency of thought, and instead view themselves as merged with one another (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). We-ness is used as a defence allowing individuals to embrace the thought that everything external is bad and everything internal is good (Cilliers & Greyvenstein, 2012).

e. Basic assumption me-ness (baM)

Within the me-ness assumption, individuals tend to be more concerned with their own inner reality as compared to the disturbing realities that they deny from the outside world. An individual's inner reality is viewed as his or her comfort zone and as an escape to avoid the external disturbances of life (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Groups that live in pretence find comfort in assuming that they are non-groups, are non-existent and that they, the group, have no reality, is contaminating, negative and taboo due to unknown and undirected feelings and thus the fear of being considered a group brings forth considerations to pursue experiences (Cilliers, 2003a). Basic assumptions continuously prove that construction is based upon fantasy and not reality, whereas actions are secretly articulated by members of groups (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Groups that are set in the tornado of basic assumptions have no sense of time, maintains a lack of communication, cooperation, learning and growth (Hafsi, 1998). Bion (1961, cited in Hafsi, 1998) deduces that basic assumptions are due to defensive reactions that are based upon responses to psychotic anxieties within the group.

2.4.4.2 The work group

According to Froggett (2005), work groups are not a collection of individuals, but instead they provide the core essence of what it means to be a human being. Work groups interweave their presence into human experiences by indicating outward objectivity and active psychological components in the consciousness of individuals (Froggett, 2005). Work groups arrange meetings to conduct activities projected in terms of mental activities. Meetings are voluntary and dependent on the sophisticated skills of individuals and prove favourable to individuals with years of training and a capacity for experience allowing them to develop mentally (Bion, 1961). Work groups are prone to consist of specific mental activities; by Bion (1961) since they are supportive of such mental activities which are not specifically directed towards the individuals who indulge in these types of mental activities. On the one hand, work groups express difficulty in bringing forth tasks in line with the purpose of the organisation, while on the other hand, they are defence mechanisms that are used by organisations to defend the consciousness and awareness of work groups against reality (Bion, 1961). A psychoanalytical approach is likely to be used in cases where work groups present conscious and unconscious conflicts, unhealthy splits between group members, isolation of group members, problematic relationships with authority figures and integrating diverse individuals into groups (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002).

2.4.3 Related system psychodynamic concepts

The following system psychodynamic concepts were reviewed since they indicate the expression of these concepts in group behaviour, which are used to examine group dynamics and to explore and work with behaviour within group involvements (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002).

2.4.3.1 Authorisation

Authorisation encourages group members to act on behalf of the group in a specific role (Cilliers, 2003a). Authorisation comprises three levels, namely representative, delegated and plenipotentiary authority. *Representative* authority symbolises the

limitations in giving and sharing sensitive information about the system across the boundary of the organisation (Hendrikz, 1999). *Delegated* authority allows for the openness in sharing but with a clear boundary across the contents thereof. *Plenipotentiary* authority allows individuals the freedom to cross the boundary of the organisation by encompassing responsibility when making decisions and when projecting the choice of conduct (Hendrikz, 1999). Job roles and tasks performed using authority are observed as a level of power. Authorisation refers to the strict and imperious influence that the group receives in order to perform tasks that is given from –

- above – by the organisation, its managers, leaders and colleagues;
- from below – by subordinates; and
- from within – by the group itself (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994).

2.4.3.2 *Boundaries*

Boundaries are referred to as physical and psychological peripheries around the system (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000), and are inclined to separate reality and fantasy, thought and impulse, person and function and identify one group from another (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002). Boundaries enclosed within anxiety permits life to be more controlled, safe and contained as opposed to no boundaries (Cilliers, 2003a). Strong boundaries are based upon the integrity of what is contained inside and are permeable enough to permit connections between the inside and outside environment (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000).

2.4.3.3 *Organisation-in-the-mind*

Organisation-in-the-mind refers to boundaries in the mind of an individual (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012), and refers to the minded impression that individuals have of the organisation (Hendrikz, 1999). There is a collective 'organisation-in-the-mind', which is shared by everyone despite the contradictory ideas that different members may possess. Individuals view the organisation from different perspectives – either as a place of power or as a place that can fulfil dependency needs (Hendrikz, 1999). The purpose and mission of an organisation are often the hidden concepts at work

awakening the level of “what we say we do” and levels of “what we really believe what we are doing” and “what is actually going in” (Hendrikz, 1999, p.18).

2.4.3.4 Relationship and relatedness

Relationship and relatedness indicate the association between group members in relation to any type of face-to-face interaction as it happens in the moment (Cilliers, 2003a). According to Koortzen and Cilliers (2002), relationships are founded on the understanding of human relationships. Existing relationships are the result of observations that groups have about themselves, about other groups and about the organisation, and it can influence the support and functioning of the group if ineffective (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Relatedness refers to group members who remain unconsciously affiliated to the group by keeping “the group in mind” (Cilliers, 2003a, p.28). From an organisational context, this concept stems from initial childhood associations in relation to the family to which one belongs. It is noted that the individuals or teams identification with, and fantasies about the organisation, and sections of it, can be witnessed as the driving force for the behaviour in the system (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000).

2.4.3.5 Representation

A group member, acting on behalf of the group, consciously or unconsciously negotiates boundaries. Representative parties that are involved in the crossing of micro system boundaries are the manager and the subordinate, where issues such as performance reviews are discussed. The crossing of meso-system boundaries ensues between two people from dissimilar departments and the crossing of macro system boundaries transpires when an individual or team meets with an individual or team from another organisation. Representation signifies the authority granted to the person crossing the boundary on behalf of someone else, the department or organisation (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). Individuals are likely to experience feelings of disempowerment and high levels of anxiety when confronted with unclear authoritative boundaries (Cilliers, 2003a).

2.4.3.6 Paranoid-schizoid position

During the foundation years of an individual, splitting and projection is used to avoid pain (Cilliers, 2003a). According to Cilliers (2003a), Klein refers to this as the paranoid-schizoid position, where 'paranoid' refers to the experience of coming from the outside and 'schizoid' refers to the central organising defence of splitting (Fraher, 2004a). According to Fraher (2004a, p.193), this is seen during the separation of the loving good breast from the hating and hated bad breast, where one object is seen as nurturing and good and the other object is seen as exasperating and bad. Infants discover techniques to detach psychologically from harmful and destructive emotions by avoiding uncomfortable feelings and projecting them onto someone else (Fraher, 2004b). Splitting is complemented by the use of projection where an individual discovers feelings in others rather than in one's own self. Bad feelings that is projected outside one's own self, assists in generating a state of illusory goodness and self-idealisation (Van Eeden, 2010).

2.4.3.7 Depressive position

The depressive position is the acknowledgement of painful feelings that are exerted through projections and the non-ownership of such feelings leading to the accusations and rebounding of projections (Cilliers, 2003a). Members of the depressive position group are more willing to embrace emotional complexities of the work that they are apportioned to as compared to a member who is isolated into carrying his or her own apportionment. An individual's emotional status is more endurable by virtue of the group's proficiency to receive and understand such emotions (Hendrikz, 1999). Such groups are likely to welcome changes when the emotions of members are endured long enough to reflect upon them and further to contain the anxieties they bring forth (Cilliers, 2003a).

2.5 THE ORGANISATION AS A MACRO SYSTEM

According to the National Development Agency (NDA) (2016) macro systems, as studied by Bronfenbrenner (1994, cited in National Development Agency (NDA) (2016, p.3), is the concluding system, and is regarded as the "societal blue print of a

specific culture or subculture encompassing values, laws, customs and resources, life-styles and opportunity structures". Macro systems consist of rules forming as the foundation of the system, constitutes a sum of aggregate consequences and is represented by the population structure of the meso-system (Dopfer, Foster, & Potts, 2004). Macro systems represent fluidity and focus on cultural and societal values, habits, laws and socioeconomic and political systems (Bergh *et al.*, 2009). These influences embody power in human development and dictate the ways in which individuals and groups live (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000). Changes occurring at the organisation level lead to ripple effects throughout the entire organisation (Robbins *et al.*, 2009). Prior to changes occurring within macro systems, simultaneous occurrences within micro systems witness a macro system evolution (Keskinen, Aaltonen, Mittleton-Kelly, Kauffman, & FFRC, 2003) which brings forth individuals who are dependent on the support of their leaders during the times of change within the organisation (Barabasz, 2016). Systems psychodynamics believes that organisational behaviour is not cast in stone. It does however advance to strong and demonstrative emotions by members and leaders, anxiety, resistance, unpredictability, irrationality in decision-making and surprising reactions (Barabasz, 2016). Collusive mirroring dynamics between leaders and individuals can be found when individuals idealise their leaders to mirror what they would like to see within themselves. Mirroring the results of leaders who have trouble in resisting mutual admiration from individuals are motive to focus on self-image rather than on the needs of the organisation (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013).

According to Kets de Vries *et al.* (2013), mirroring is described as a common transference process, which begins when a baby looks at his or her mother for the first time. From that moment, the mirror stance forms an opinion about an individual's being and behaviour and grows into the individual's daily life forming part of the relationships with him- or herself and with others (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013). The analogy between the apple and the parent, being the apple of a parent's eye, leads to a sense of self-esteem, ambition, and the capacity to engage assertively at a later stage in life requires healthy mirroring (Marmarosh & Mann, 2014). It is argued that mirroring is not only a reflection of a person's true self but also displays ideas of self-exaggeration (Schmolke & Hoffman, 2014). Unhealthy mirroring results in instances when an individual's self-objective needs are not met. This is usually the result of

neglectful and inattentive parents (Marmarosh & Mann, 2014). The catastrophe of developing healthy mirroring stances emphasises the lost feelings individuals experience in the midst of their lives (Bromberg, 1993). According to Bromberg (1993), individuals discover that they are lost between the 'mirror' (an echo of self-appraisal) and the 'mask' (a camouflage in search of an echo) through which they seek self-affirmation. The art of living develops ways of controlling the organisation and its people from behind the mask (Bromberg, 1983). Organisational leaders are expected to form the support structure in relation to its workers otherwise the result of irrational actions from organisational leaders are likely to observe blatant failures as opposed to positive mirrors by successful leaders, such as Richard Branson and Mark Zuckerberg (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013). In times of organisational crisis, a positive side of mirroring is born from unity, despite the temporariness of positive mirroring. Individuals and leaders defer self-criticism and face organisational crises with a common vision and action. Regrettably, when transferential patterns persevere, both leaders and individuals discontinue responses towards the reality of situations and instead retreat inwards to allow the comfort of past hopes and fantasies to govern their intentions (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013).

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, organisations were explored from a systems psychodynamic stance, by discussing micro, meso- and macro systems. The chapter commenced with a discussion of organisations as systems, followed by exploring individuals as micro systems, the group as a meso-system and the total organisation as a macro system. Related systems psychodynamic concepts were also discussed. The chapter concludes with this summary.

In the next chapter, gender role expectations and gender transformation are discussed.

CHAPTER 3:

GENDER ROLE EXPERIENCES AND GENDER TRANSFORMATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, gender role experiences and gender transformation are discussed. This chapter will commence by discussing gender, followed by exploring gender roles, gender experiences and gender transformation towards a system psychodynamic integration. The chapter concludes with a summary.

3.2 GENDER DEFINED

Two of Sigmund Freud's most vital discoveries are associated by the psychoanalytical treatment of gender: the idea of internal conflict and the thought that we hold an unconscious part of ourselves of which we are unaware despite its motivating factors toward individuals (Carter, 2014). According to Haspels and Suriyasarn (2010), *gender* is denoted towards the social differences and relationships that boys and girls and men and women share. Social differences and relationships are changeable over time, are learned and differ widely within and between cultures. The early life stages of boys and girls are conditioned by gender rules and relationships, which provide opportunities that either gender attracts during their life because of conditionings (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). According to Carter (2014), Freud claims that gender is developed and not considered a calling or a characteristic. Sorell and Montgomery (2001) however argued that biology is not just a deterministic constituent and assists in contributing towards the development constituent of psychosocial processes. Unlike gender, sex is not affected by history or culture (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010), and sex and gender are not interchangeable concepts (Smith, 2006). Freud was one of the first psychoanalysts to conceive the detachment of gender from biology and sex (Carter, 2014).

However, the recent discrepancies between the terms *sex* and *gender* are disputed, as sex is understood to be a concept that is socially and constructively created by the people in society (Reeves & Baden, 2000). The beliefs held by gender are

culture bound and historically persistent due to them encompassing physiology (Smith, 2006). Gender is seen as synonymous with the “deeply entrenched institutionalisation of sexual difference” (Littlefield *et al.*, 2015, p.7), where humans are born either male or female (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). **Sex** is represented as a vehicle that differentiates between male and female physiological characteristics, bodily rhythms, biological needs, including food, water, sleep, sexual fulfilment and life itself (Meena, 1992) whereas **gender** refers to masculine and feminine categories (Smith, 2006). The beliefs in the differences between the sex of men and women’s posit differences in their behaviour and competencies (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). In this study, *gender* will be defined as a socially constructed term referring to roles, behaviours, activities and attributes, which are considered appropriate by society for either men or women (Smith, 2006). This definition explains how an individual’s biology is culturally valued and interpreted into accepted ideas of what it really means to be a man or a woman. It further identifies that the hierarchical power relations between men and women are instead constructed socially by people in society and not only derived directly from biology (Reeves & Baden, 2000).

According to Carter (2014), males discover the meaning of masculinity by presenting themselves in ways that are not regarded as feminine. Psychoanalytical theory confirms that the attachment and familiarity that boys share with their mothers inevitably brings them difficulty when attempting to achieve their own gender identity and this is due to the closeness they share with their mothers (Carter, 2014). Mahalik (1999) thus indicates that boys tend to become conflicted with themselves when the projections of society to display masculinity are forced upon them. Mahalik (1999, p.7), argues that boys are indoctrinated into believing what “acceptable and unacceptable behaviours” entail through the methods of reinforcement and punishment. It is believed that boys who respond to receiving love and nurturing during their boyhood manifest gentleness and softness when attempting to confront the harsh realities of the world during their manhood (Mahalik, 1999). Boys and girls are associated with their mothers from an early age, where girls are imparted with lifelong and unforgettable meanings, while boys strive to define their own gender identity, which does not match that of their mothers. In order to fit into a correct gender role, boys reject and denigrate femininity, which occurs during the early

stages of life, and instead identify with masculinity, which perpetuates throughout the course of a man's life (Carter, 2014).

The rejection of feminine tasks, traits and qualities are deeply rooted within boys since they consider it socially less valuable as compared to the tasks, traits and qualities that are associated with masculinity (Carter, 2014). Gender identity is constructed during the early stages of life using psychoanalytical processes, and delivers information on how to perform across different situations (Carter, 2014). The gender identities of men and women and the accompanying expectancies regarding the roles and responsibilities of these men and women are changeable between and within cultures (Reeves & Baden, 2000). Studies reveal that the cultural classifications of men and women are seen as universal, verbose and abstract in supporting individuals to investigate who they are and who others are in order to manage and act within situations. During studies of personal perception, individuals usually categorise themselves and others in a multitude of ways according to cultural and situational gender-relevant identities and roles (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004).

The emerging gender studies during the late 1960s brought forth criticism and inequality in personal relationships and social positioning (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). During the 1970s, gender was embellished and preserved as a patriarchal system of power in which women followed a man-made consciousness and believed that they were naturally and stereotypically better suited to domestic roles (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). In an attempt to eliminate the past oppressions of women, social and historical structures were introduced. The introductions to these types of structures were regulated upon bounded oppositions and hierarchical relationships (Cornwall, 2005). *Gender inequality* is defined as the differences between men and women (Cornwall, 2005), which systematically empowers one group to the detriment of another (Smith, 2006). Past oppressions that were confronted by women made women realise the importance of improving their status in an attempt to gain better gender equality (Jackson, 1998). According to Jackson (1998, p.11), nowadays, gender inequality is usually placed between extreme inequality and complete equality, and to fully explore modern-day history of gender inequality, the middle ground must be considered from both sides. The past oppression and the present day of gender inequality between men and women is self-evident to some people nowadays, while to others it is and has always been questionable (Jackson, 1998).

Gender inequality is defined by Reeves and Baden (2000, p.7) as the systematic, unfavourable treatment of individuals based on gender, denying certain individuals certain rights, opportunities or resources.

Another definition of *gender inequality* by Haspels and Suriyasarn (2010, p.12) indicates that gender inequality is based on “any distinction, exclusion or preference in relation to sex or gender values, norms or stereotypes, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity and treatment”. According to Haspels and Suriyasarn (2010), law in most countries prohibits gender inequality based on sex but in reality, women in developing and developed countries endure gender inequality in one form or another, either in the home, work or both. Reeves and Baden (2000), claim that gender law is a cultural product consisting of oppressive gender ideologies. Reeves and Baden (2000), further claim that despite legal provisions in the past, like constitutional and national, the endorsement of gender equality principles, religious and other customary laws are likely to prioritise and support men. The transformation of these gender laws and the input from women and capacity-building approaches which were used to overcome gender barriers served as effective tools for challenging gender inequality (Reeves & Baden, 2000). Feminists discovered that gender is a created concept used to feminise gender as a female aspect. This discovery led to the burden faced by the majority of men who continued to sustain the labelling related to domination, competition, being macho and hating women (misogyny) (Meena, 1992).

Men sustain burdens that are placed upon them and are witnessed through the physical and emotional practices of violence, sexual harassment, physical abuse and emotional and substance abuse. Feminists are guided to shift the focus and attention that assumes men abusive and are instead encouraged to assist them from a positive perspective (Meena, 1992). Two types of indicated gender inequality are status inequality and positional inequality. *Status inequality* is founded upon the associations between those individuals who are different and who are distinguished through their unique personal traits. *Positional inequality* is founded through the associations between those individuals who are within a social structure and which possesses unequal rights, resources and responsibilities (Ridgeway, 2007). Gender inequality increases the inequities between men and women across organisational

benefits, management positions and promotions. Organisations housing gender inequality are likely to experience concerning health issues such as coronary heart disease, stroke and mental illness from both men and women (Dudley, Kerns, & Steadman, 2007; Smith, 2006).

The initial emphasis on the organisational element that was thought to be the contributing factor to systemic gender inequalities is reflected by social structures like social class and ethnicity coupled with different regimes of inequality in organisations. The following points however indicate that gender inequality is viewed as a systematic inequality between men and women in power with control in terms of

—

- goals, resources and outcomes;
- workplace decisions, such as how to organise work;
- opportunities for promotion and interesting work;
- security in employment and benefits, pay and other monetary rewards;
- respect; and
- pleasures in work and work relations (Casaca & Lortie, 2017).

Social relationships shared between men and women are distinctly sought upon by irregular divisions and attributes that predict power, domination and rule-based relations (Meena, 1992). Gendered power relations permeate social institutions so that gender is never absent (Reeves & Baden, 2000). Once women discovered that the inequalities of the past could not be changed, they were more than likely to undertake the task of improving the gender-based inequalities that occurred in the past. The apparent improvement towards the future leaves a reduced need for engagements in an effort for justification (O'Brien, Major, & Gilbert, 2012).

3.3 GENDER ROLES

Gender roles refer to flexible and rigid activities and tasks within which men and women participate (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). These activities and tasks contrast and change according to the unique and individual qualities of the people who fulfil them. Traditional societies segregated the roles of men and women according to

their sexual differences, which identified men as working away from home and women who were expected to assume duty towards the family and household (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). In today's modern day society, the roles that men and women resume are increasingly interchangeable, which identifies men as assuming responsibility towards household work and women as career-orientated breadwinners in the family (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). In the current study, gender roles are defined as the conscious and unconscious assumptions of "proper behaviour, attitudes and activities, displayed by men and women" (Irefin *et al.*, 2012, p.18). When questions relating to characteristics and decision-making arise, gender roles demand that women from all backgrounds are expected to place family at the forefront and personal goals second, as compared to men (Smits, Mulder, & Hooimeijer, 2003).

3.3.1 Changing roles of men and women

Different thoughts and expectancies based on the characteristics, abilities and behaviour of men and women (masculinity and femininity) arise from individuals who belong to different cultures and traditions (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). Notions on masculinity and femininity cause restraints and equally limit the prospective of men and women and more often than not, such notions are far from reality and do not reflect the actual contributions made by men and women (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). According to Raghunandan (2018), gender-specific roles indicate the subjection of men and women to various standards of expectations relating to behaviour and attitude. History, culture and traditional socio-environmental forces shape the behaviour and attitude of men and women and encourages the use of specific kinds of behaviour (Raghunandan, 2018). Boys and girls who interact using the "right behaviours" receive incentives and are punished for engaging in the "wrong behaviours" (Raghunandan, 2018, p.188). The solicitation of traditional gender roles brought about many beliefs differentiating between women and men (Irefin *et al.*, 2012) and enable these beliefs to identify the archetypal stereotypical differentiations of gender (Kite, 2015).

In the past, while men fought for authority and money, women were and still today continue to be regarded as the contributor of soft and nurturing behaviours, all of

which are used to shelter, safeguard, support and maintain life in its most delicate stages: in babies, infants, the elderly, the dying, the frail and the physically disabled (Sanchez de Madariaga & Neuman, 2016). Women have always been associated with sincere, passive, supportive, emotional, welcoming and approachable dispositions (Parcheta *et al.*, 2013). Coupled with taking care of children and attending to household matters, women are further expected to display pretty appearances and graceful, elegant personalities (Kite, 2015). Men, on the other hand, display assertive, controlling, authoritative, determined self-oriented, manly and macho personas (Parcheta *et al.*, 2013) leading to the empowerment of strong and rugged characteristics in conjunction with being the head of the home and managing financial obligations (Kite, 2015).

In light of traditional views, men are seen as breadwinners while women are seen as homemakers (Perrone-McGovern, Wright, & Vance Jackson, 2009). Men are further perceived as status worthy and proficient whereas women are perceived as helpless and ineffectual (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Women are seen to operate from an emotional perspective when it comes to care-taking and problem solving as they project an understanding towards people and their emotions, whereas men assign more importance, as compared to women, towards qualities resonating with authority and conformity (Best, 2009). According to Best (2009, p.347), contrasts between what men and women consider important are known to “shape behaviour and situational choices as compared to status considerations”. Kite (2015), indicates that opinions regarding gender are professed upon by qualities of masculine and feminine projections. This kind of gender beliefs is forced onto children by societal conditionings and expectations, as parents and peers display different forms of treatment towards boys and girls (Kite, 2015). According to Kite (2015, p.221), parents encourage gender role socialisation through gender-based activities where girls are expected to be passive and play with dolls while boys are expected to be active and play with trucks. Gender-congruent counterparts dislike individuals who display characteristics portrayed by the opposite sex, whereas individuals who demonstrate behaviours of the current sex are liked and considered well-balanced (Kite, 2015). Kite (2015), indicates that many men have proved to be the opposite as compared to what traditional stereotypes suggest.

Nowadays, men encompass warm, homely personalities revealing women as the ambitious type as well as being household heads (Kite, 2015), and studies further indicate that a high percentage of married women are employed (Smits *et al.*, 2003). Men display eagerness to have their female partners granted equal employment opportunities, whereas the majority of women aspire to have gender equality all for themselves instead, which is owed to past gender oppression (Sanghani, 2016). Work aspirations and expectations of women evolved from domesticated female roles to a broadened scale, including participation in the labour market, management positions and entrepreneurship (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). In spite of having a career and desiring recognition, women realise that work success is not as imperative to them as it is to men (Irefin *et al.*, 2012; Kite, 2015). Women have become so immune to past oppressions that they have no problem in delaying career aspirations in lieu of familial responsibilities (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010; Kite, 2015). Unlike men, the lives of women are constructed in numerous ways where they are faced with continuous challenges in attempting to advance their careers (Taneja *et al.*, 2012).

Women are rigorously constricted by traditional gender roles as compared to men (Irefin *et al.*, 2012). According to Martin and Barnard (2013), women who rebel and oppose the traditional norms of conservative female careers often revert to these traditional careers that acclimate the primary caregiver role. Conventional households maintain a traditional composition accepting men as the authoritarian figure regardless of gender equality and women empowerment. In organisations, traditional stereotypes tend to trickle down towards organisational policies and practices to preserve ostracised women's work roles (Martin & Barnard, 2013). Women continue to uphold their provider roles despite the diverse work positions within which they participate (Sanchez de Madariaga & Neuman, 2016). Stereotypical characteristics lead to expectations relating to status and bring forth ignorance directed towards other equally important gender-related traits. Since various traits predict the nature of a person, stereotypes predict a person's behaviour, which is more beneficial than status (Best, 2009). Stereotypes are agents of normative expectancies and further describes the beliefs that people have about what social groups are or what they should represent. Gender stereotypes are extremely influential since they dictate what men and women should and should not

represent (Otterbacher, Bates, & Clough, 2017). Many organisations have trouble in integrating the career paths of women together with family responsibilities due to the structure and functioning of the workplace (Martin & Barnard, 2013).

Research based on gender stereotypes suggests that women are perceived as warm and nurturing, and men are observed as agentic and competent, solidifying the traditional gender beliefs about women and men (Otterbacher *et al.*, 2017). According to Payne (2003, p.4), a “good father” is a “good provider” re-iterates the worth of “man-as-provider” in association to the proficiency of monetary support toward his family. A women’s liberation movement (Women’s Liberation Movement) disputed the principles relating to the foundation of the traditional roles of men (Payne, 2003). Payne (2003, p.4), claims that men in fact require nurturing, caring and intimate characteristics, including engaging in childcare and household activities in an effort to fulfil the belief that women have of a “new good provider”. Women have indicated their attraction to partners who integrate a balance in both traditional male and female gender roles (Payne, 2003). Thus, modern and career-orientated women of today spend less time in childcare activities and domesticated tasks than they did thirty years ago, whereas employed men are left to fill the gap and dedicate more of themselves toward their children and household activities (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Traditional gender-role expectations hamper and produce harmful and strenuous outcomes for men. Emotions that men suffer from are related to low self-esteem, frustration and disempowerment due to pressures of the old regime, which they currently have to endure (Kite, 2015).

These emotions are linked to physiological and psychological stresses, such as unwelcomed health issues, mental stress and feelings of worthlessness in fulfilling the classic man and male “macho” role (Kite, 2015, p.220). Since men are accustomed to keeping emotions hidden, they rely on violent behaviour and project aggression through substance abuse leading to alterations in mood and behaviour (Clarfelt, 2015).

The following are five elements that indicate the typical male traditional gender roles:

- anti-feminine element – showing no ‘sissy’ stuff, including openness and vulnerability;

- success element – proving one's macho-ness at work and sports;
- aggressive element – using force in dealing with others;
- sexual element – initiating and controlling sexual relationships; and
- self-reliant element – remaining cool and composed (Irefin *et al.*, 2012, p.19).

Through these elements it can be argued that men endure a similar gender stereotypical monster that affects and restricts women in order to preserve the stereotypes spread by society, and the men and women who do not conform often tend to experience negative consequences (Berlatsky, 2013). A negative consequence suffered by some men is through their display of warm and sincere behaviour in the workplace which is not eligible for leadership roles as compared to authoritative and agentic personalities which is assumingly required for leadership roles (Otterbacher *et al.*, 2017). Such stereotypical patterns regarding gender role patterns are equally damaging to men as they are to women within the labour force (Berlatsky, 2013). Berlatsky (2013) believes that men set the tone for aggressive and violent behaviour because during cases of domestic rights and custody battles, men engage in slandered and angered behaviour that is shrugged off and regarded as naturally projected behaviour associated with men.

Domestic slander projected by men dates way back to the 1950s when mothers and children were segregated from the world of work while husbands and fathers spent long hours at work. Fathers of families were deprived from spending luxury, valued and interactive time with their wives and children in meaningful ways (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). According to Chodorow (1978, cited in Lerman, 1986), concerns were expressed over the absence of a father or a husband, and the social isolation of the mother and child unit. The absence of a father figure within the family unit leads to an upsurge in conflicts relating to masculinity and a fear of women. In truth, traditional behaviours prove true in both men and women (Lerman, 1986). Career prospects of women are constrained due to traditional perceptions of passivity, domestication and sexual appeal resulting in sexual harassment and exploitation (Berlatsky, 2013). However, women with agentic qualities suffer the repercussion of backlash during recruitment processes since employers expect women to portray only warm and soft traits. This type of management dilemma indicates a two-folded

problem since ambitious women who wish to progress into leadership are likely to carry themselves as atypical women, but they are still required to display their empathetic, warm natured and non-threatening side (Otterbacher *et al.*, 2017). Odora-Hoppers (2005), indicates that the different and various accesses to and control over resources are in accordance to the gender roles played by men and women.

In conclusion, Odora-Hoppers (2005), distinguishes between two gender needs, which arise with different gender roles: practical gender needs, and strategic gender needs. *Practical gender needs* project themselves in existing gender roles and are fulfilled through activities that assist men and women to perform existing roles, effortlessly. *Strategic gender needs* are the needs of men and women, which change the existing gender roles. These are achieved through the actions that challenge existing gender roles (Odora-Hoppers, 2005). The positive reflection in mental and physical health and relationships between men and women are gained from multiple interactive roles. Women benefit from the worker role whereas men are seen to benefit from participating in family roles. Multiple roles add value in terms of an additional household income, an expanded frame of social references and support, an increase in the self-complexity of men and women, and similarity in experiences and gender role ideology (Barnett & Hyde, 2001).

Transgenders reside in an unaccepting world – within their family life, school life, employment life, social life and health (Divan *et al.*, 2016). In society, the existence of transgenders is denied since many transgenders experience difficulty when attempting to access institutions and services, unlike others who see little value in things. The outward appearance of transgenders brings forth unwelcomed expositions to discrimination, teasing, violence, bullying or the fear of emotional and physical attacks (Divan *et al.*, 2016). According to the beliefs bestowed by society, transgenders threaten gender categories by not fitting in but most importantly by claiming to be a bit of both through the “intersexual” identity of being both man and woman (Nagoshi, Brzuzy, & Terrell, 2012, p.406).

These individuals are subjected to being victims of transphobia due to the social stigmatisation attached to being a transphobia (Whittle *et al.*, 2007). Transphobia is

defined as “an emotional disgust towards individuals who do not conform to society’s gender expectations” (Whittle *et al.*, 2007, p.21). According to Nagoshi *et al.* (2012), transgender individuals inhabit a gender identity that is different from traditional gender roles thus the gender identification of transgender individuals tend to either violate the heteronormative theory of male and female or blends the diverse identities and role aspects of being male or female. Transgenders are known to break through gender roles and identity by transcending through the traditional boundaries of one gender to a complete other (Nagoshi *et al.*, 2012) in terms of clothing and the ways in which transgender people present themselves (Whittle *et al.*, 2007).

Sometimes, transgenders who voice their unique gender identity at an early age often experience denial from their families or they are expelled from their homes (Divan *et al.*, 2016). Some transgenders suffer through the rejection within their homes leading to deficient educational opportunities with no surety towards their mental and physical health needs. Those who voice their gender identity at a later stage in life are often faced with denunciation by mainstream society and social service institutions (Divan *et al.*, 2016). Environments that are hostile in nature usually fail to comprehend the needs of transgendered individuals, as a result, threaten their safety, and are unprepared to offer sensitive health and social service needs (Divan *et al.*, 2016). Transgender persons find that their status affects their work life most as this is where they experience discrimination and inequality. Some of the experiences suffered by transgenders involve cases of verbal abuse and physical assault leaving most transgenders to wanting to change jobs regularly due to harassment and bullying (Whittle *et al.*, 2007). According to Divan *et al.* (2016), transgender persons are the most ostracised individuals since they experience discrimination in most areas of the organisation like: during the recruitment process of a job, retirement, training opportunities, employee benefits and job advancement.

3.3.2 Working couples

Working couples or dual-career couples consist of two working individuals within a relationship, with or without children, and who are engaged with professional work every day. Couples with children are known as working families and the decisions

that they make regarding work and family life are based upon the work situation of the couple (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010). The integration of work and family roles is beneficial to the couple since both individuals profit from an increase in income, a chance to advance from traditional gender role stereotypes, and finally, to become engaged in an intimate relationship on equal terms based on equality, initiative and power. Children are most likely to benefit from a dual relationship by attaining financial security, adequate role models and an opportunity at independence (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010). A sociologist, Talcott Parsons (1949, cited in Barnett & Hyde, 2001), claimed that the effectiveness of a family unit is dependent on the specialisation of the husband within the working world, and the specialisation of the wife into domesticated, homely tasks (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Parson's statement reflects the trade-offs between a couple's various skills attributes towards the assurance and stability within their marriage. The specialisation and complementarity of gender roles of each individual in the marriage proves vital and important to the quality of marital stability (Barnett & Hyde, 2001).

Schreuder and Coetzee (2011, p.211), share three marital patterns of dual-career families: conventional, modern, and role-sharing patterns. *Conventional patterns* refer to both partners who are committed to each other and who are career-oriented but the wife still assumes full responsibility for the children and the household. *Modern patterns* refer to equal sharing of the parent responsibility, however the wife still takes sole responsibility of the household. *Role-sharing patterns* refer to equal and active involvement from both partners in terms of their children, their household duties and career aspirations (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011, p.211). According to Bakker and Geurt (2004), in today's working world, many couples experience challenges in merging household responsibilities with work demands. Such responsibilities bring forth stressors, one of which is the mutually incompatible work and family domains, which arise from role pressures (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). Stressors are triggered due to the number of roles that working couples manage, such as being parent, wife and husband, careerist, self and friend (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Many employed parents face difficulty with synchronising work and family demands (Bakker & Geurts, 2004) because the demand of one role makes it difficult to comply with the demands of other roles (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).

Bergh et al. (2009) introduces three types of conflict that brings about work–family conflict: time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behaviour-based conflict (Bergh et al., 2009). *Time-based conflict* is related to time demands that make it physically impossible to be in two places at the same time, for example an inflexible work schedule that offers less time towards family (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2011), *strain-based conflict* is the spillover of strain from one domain to the other, for example the strain experienced by a caregiver who has to perform well at work and who has to look after an aged family member. *Behaviour-based* conflict refers to the incompatibility of behaviours requested in each domain, for example status driven men who are authoritative in the workplace may portray the same behaviour at home instead of being warm and caring (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Work–family enrichment is the extent to which the participation within one role improves and betters the quality of life and performance within another role, and where the quality of life includes increasingly positive side-effects (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Work–family enrichment produces positive outcomes on job satisfaction of employees by mediating positive work factors and family interfaces (Fung, Ahmad, & Omar, 2012). This type of enrichment is attained by participating in multiple roles, and is experienced through a variety of rewards, such as role privileges, status security, status enhancement and personality enrichment (Fung et al., 2012).

Working couples are likely to resign from their jobs and seek employment elsewhere if their current employment does not cater towards the needs of their family (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). In the past, organisations followed outdated models which were based on the right-to-work ethic and where devotion was directed towards the job first and family second (Berne, 1990). Nowadays, outdated models are likely to experience difficulty in attracting and retaining the most capable and motivated individuals due to laxity and non-interest on the side of the organisation to assist and guide employees towards achieving work–life balance (Robbins et al., 2009). Organisations, in the past, avoided so-called ‘unnecessary costs’ associated with family leave, job-sharing, part-time work and flexible working hours (Berne, 1990). Organisational strategies and initiatives that guide employees toward minimising work–life conflict, time-based strategies, information-based strategies, money-based strategies, technology-based strategies, direct services and culture-

change strategies are identified in organisations (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Employees who are surrounded by supportive and understanding management are associated with minimal work–family conflict and usually experience less stress when coping with work and family demands (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).

The idea of marriage is an evolutionary one where at times children of dual-career couples recognise their parents as role models. Children epitomise ethics of equitable responsibility within the home and workplace. Imagine a world where sons are enlightened on the intricacies of cooking, cleaning and changing diapers with a sense of satisfaction and a boost in self-esteem, and where daughters ceased apologising for self-imposed failures and guilt regarding dusty windows or about being chronically fatigued at the end of the day to provide quality time for family members (Berne, 1990). According to Gilbert (1993), men and women should be alleviated and exempted from controlled and constrained gender roles that posit limitations in order to live a full and happy life. Through her study, Berne (1990), discovered that the highest form of marital satisfaction is held by most dual-career couples. Some husbands with full-time employed wives feel the extra burdened due to the increase in household duties at the end of a dual-career workday, as once they arrive home, they have a houseful of chores waiting to be attended to (Berne, 1990). At one stage, men looked up to their own fathers as role models. Since the lives of their fathers operated in an entirely different generation and world, men are now forging ahead through new, untrodden fields when it comes to homemaking and childcare. The re-evaluating of homemaking and childcare roles are expected to provide sufficient social support for men and women who select this role, and furthermore employed men will find comfort in sharing previously female-oriented roles (Berne, 1990).

From the earlier mentioning's about gender, it is evident that men, women and working couples are related to and integrated with the systems psychodynamic stance as follows:

- both men and women often look at each other as objects and treat each other as objects (Klein, 1975);

- women idealise men, because of how they (men) are treated in the workplace (Krantz, 1989);
- men denigrate women, use them as their possession, and project all kinds of deficiencies and incompetence onto them (Long, 2008);
- women start to behave like men by mirroring their behaviours (collusive mirroring dynamics) (Maccoby, 2004); and
- both men and women could collude with each other, because there are inherent benefits in this dynamic play (Obholzer, 2001; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007)

3.4 GENDER EXPERIENCES

In the next sections, gender equity, gender equality and gender inequality are discussed.

3.4.1 Gender equity

Gender equity is the fair treatment of both men and women, in respect of needs and interests (Macdonald, 2007), and refers to the “fair and equitable division of opportunities and constraints amongst men and women” (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010, p.430). Gender equity enables the uniformity of outcomes to recognise the different needs of men and women, their preferences, interests and redistribution of power and resources (De Waal, 2006, p.210), and may necessitate the difference in treatment of men and women (Reeves & Baden, 2000). Gender policies directed towards equitable and fair treatment of men and women are considered equal in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities (Macdonald, 2007). A gender equity approach investigates the re-thinking of development policies, programmes and interventions that affect gender relations and the different realities and interests of men and women (Reeves & Baden, 2000). According to Reeves and Baden (2000), gender equity is less accepted in gender mainstreaming strategies.

3.4.2 Gender equality

Gender equality refers to the equality and fairness of men and women in acknowledging that all individuals, both men and women, boys and girls, are at liberty “to develop personal abilities and to make choices without the confinements set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices” (Eskola, 2012, p.2). According to Coetzee and Schreuder (2010), gender equality plays an important role in work–family policies and in comparison to men, current trends assume that women require an increase in familial time and responsibilities, as well as special treatments. However, it is highly unlikely that gender equality will be achieved should support and initiatives be directed only towards women, these initiatives will instead bring forth inequalities in the workplace (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010). In the working world, the thought of women remaining at home to oversee the home and to take care of children and elderly family members does not concur with the concept of gender equality. Women are endorsed to participate in the workplace where an equal range of choices are available together with the capacity to make choices and act upon them (Klugman, Kolb, & Morton, 2014).

According to Reeves & Baden (2000), gender equality demands that women be provided with the same opportunistic prospects as men. Equal status through the elimination of discrimination in opportunities for women and equal opportunities pertaining to policies and legislation to increase the participation of women is sought after. Gender equality does not guarantee the equality of outcomes, but instead merely removes the barriers to participate on a level playing field without acknowledging that the realities and experiences of men and women are different (Reeves & Baden, 2000). Gender equality goals in the working world, as identified by Eskola (2012, p.2), aims to consist of the following, in both men and women:

- equal opportunities and treatment in employment;
- equality in attaining meaningful career development;
- equal contribution and participation in decision-making;
- equal compensation for work of equal value;
- equal access to safe and healthy working conditions; and
- a balance between work and family life, which serves as a purpose for men and women.

3.4.3 Gender inequality

The roots of gender inequality date far back, to the earlier decades of the twentieth century when women were branded physically and socially delicate in comparison to men (Macdonald, 2007). According to Macdonald (2007), manifestations dictated the inappropriateness for women to participate in certain types of work, specifically work that might have endangered the health of women and most importantly their childbearing function. Society agrees with history which states that it is only a woman who can give birth to a child and breastfeed the child, and it is only a man who can produce sperm and grow a beard (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). Lowe et al. (2002) argues that over twenty-five years preceding their study, mainstream organisational analysis responded to mounting criticisms which resulted from the neglect of gender and produced numerous gendered discernments and concerns. Organisations view gender inequality as a multifaceted phenomenon, which is visible (and invisible), and relates to organisational structures, processes and practices (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015), and thus many organisations nowadays remain subjected to the traditional divisions of gender inequality (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). Despite the introduction of dual-career couples, many women remain subjected to matters of the hearth. Neither men nor women are blamed for the ubiquitous gender inequality in today's organisations (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000).

Even though men are not to be blamed, organisational life presumes that reality arises from a male-based culture, rather than from society. Organisations managed by men work intensely to create fair and equitable environments for both sexes. Many men are unwelcoming towards the obsolete method of labour and yearn for the dissolution of a [f]ather knows best world (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). Davies (2014) argues that gender inequality is not a man's problem or a woman's problem, but rather a problem for humanity as an entirety. Rejecting gender inequality as an exclusive man's problem or a woman's issue provides excuses to dismiss ownership by both sexes (Davies, 2014). Gender inequality is widespread and extraordinarily diverse, and is the inconceivable inequality between men and women in endless circumstances, both immediate and enduring, by both objective criteria and subjective experience (Jackson, 2017). Thus, gender inequality is the systematic,

unfavourable treatment of individuals based on gender, which denies these individuals the rights, opportunities or resources (Reeves & Baden, 2000, p.2).

3.4.4 Gender inequality attributes in males

The fight for gender equality has become equivalent to hating men due to its historic gender-based agenda (Porter, 2014). Traditional stereotypes are conditioned to such an extent that men find it difficult to live up to these traditional stereotypes. To be a 'real man' means to demonstrate physical and emotional strength and to be the financial breadwinner in the family. The 'real man' stress leaves men feeling inadequate and resilient towards acquiring help (Miehls, 2017). Men suffer from the negative consequences regarding gender inequality, such as family leave and flexible working hours, which are easily accessible to women (Langbakk, 2013). Men are encouraged to enforce a hegemonic masculine persona, which is the idealised form of masculinity in any given time and geographic location (Miehls, 2017).

3.4.4.1 Men and the provider role

The absence of men from the familial role is viewed as unproblematic and customary. Challenging customary and cultural roles poses a dilemma for men who find themselves in precarious and isolated positions (Sheridan, 2004). Men are mandated to satisfy labelled expectations of being successful breadwinners within family units (Sheridan, 2004) despite the physical and emotional costs involved (Gilbert, 1993). The 'provider' role is based upon the assumption that men should undertake this role and follow through with being the provider (Sheridan, 2004). The perception that men are the main breadwinners in households suggests that they have fewer responsibilities pertaining to the home front (Chang, 2011). Men who are oppressed and burdened by the provider role are prohibited from discovering their deeper selves and from bonding with and gaining nurturing from other men (Gilbert, 1993).

3.4.4.2 Men's physical and psychological well-being

Theories, such as the attachment theory (see Chodorow, 1989) and the separation theory (see Chodorow, 1989), are used to explain the self-definition of men and women (Sheridan, 2004). Women boast the capacity to mirror their sense of identity through their connection to others by helping, supporting, nurturing and developing empathy, and men sadly accentuate their sense of separateness by diverging their sense of 'being'. Men assume that in order to develop their sense of identity they are required to segregate themselves from others in terms of abilities and attributes. Men who place importance on family and who deviate from their expected work roles are subjected to harsh labelling (Sheridan, 2004), since the workplace is identified as a stressor for a man's health (Hare-Mustin, 1988). The home environment poses as a place of recuperation away from the stressful work environment. Men feel that stay-at-home mums and wives are not prone to stressful situations, since the home provides a natural setting, free from stress (Hare-Mustin, 1988). According to Caneto (1989), alcohol and substance abuse are highly favoured by men who are affected by stress, meanwhile disapproved by some women. Men are attracted to these types of exploitation, which assist in manifesting or increasing virility (Caneto, 1989). Substance abuse is based upon two theories: disease theory (see Jellinek, 1960; Keller, 1976; Vaillant, 1983), and enabler theory (see Jellinek, 1960; Keller, 1976; Vaillant, 1983). According to Caneto (1989), disease theory is unfortunately indebted to a genetic-based reliant disease where the abusing person is biologically predestined to project the manifested behaviour. Enabler theory involves family members who enable, instigate, reinforce, maintain and even worsen the addiction (Caneto, 1989). The motivation for the enabler, who typically is the non-addicted wife, to condone such behaviour is ascribed to the internal desire to feel loved, needed and in control or the aspiration for the addict to remain sick and dependent in order to shy away from self-owned shame, pain, fear and anger. The enabler theory posits that a man's addiction becomes the family's ailment when the collectives in the family become addicted, implying that, when a man is addicted to substances, the family members are addicted to the man's addiction (Caneto, 1989).

Men are known to display strong characteristics associated with exhibiting power and authority, strength, independence and stoicism. They are inclined to hold onto values of hegemonic masculinity and to maintain a sense of physical strength, bravado, competition with other men, and to retain dominant positions over women

(Miehls, 2017). In order to promote individual growth, men are advised to maintain a healthy and positive sense of masculinity, which embraces the characteristics of traditional masculinity while identifying, affirming and contributing towards building positive male strengths. Hegemonically masculine men have trouble in seeking physical health and mental health care (Miehls, 2017). The typical male persona is generally associated with interpersonal behaviours that prove problematic, such as “increased risk-taking, self-destructive behaviours, emotional inexpressiveness, the drive to make money, power and sex partners” (Mahalik, 1999, p.5). Mahalik (1999, p.5) further mentions that destructive masculine behaviours interfere with the “inner peace of males, family relations, sexual fulfilment and physical, emotional and mental health”. According to Meth (1990, cited in Mahalik, 1999), men who enact the masculine role repress their feminine side and project feared feelings towards displaying any forms of femininity. At home, men experience difficulty in expressing their innermost feelings with partners simultaneously withdrawing themselves and advocating negative behaviour when faced with disappointments in the workplace (Mahalik, 1999). Men remain fully reliant on women to express their feelings for them and to provide the nurturance that they are unable to provide (Gilbert, 1993). Men who spend time with family and who are involved in household activities produce healthy emotions, physiques and family relations (Langbakk, 2013).

Men propel bouts of violence, frustration, aggression, stress and emotional abuse when unable to fulfil real man behaviour (Clarfelt, 2015). According to Prime and Moss-Racusin (2009), men are defined as shadowing the strict code of conduct which psychologists refer to as masculine norms. The focus of gender issues has always been streamlined to the gender issues of women giving little or no attention towards men and masculine norms in organisations. The need to close gender gaps in the organisation, either accompanied by the support or resistance of men, is highly dependent on the negotiation of masculine norms (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009). The following are four common masculine norms as identified by (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009, p.3):

- **Avoid all things feminine** – men should under no circumstances be seen or acknowledged as conforming to feminine norms. Men who display feminine

behaviour find their manly status being questioned, criticised, ridiculed and rejected. They endure pejorative terms, such as 'sissy', 'wimp' and 'whipped'.

- **Be a winner** – this indicates activities that increase the wealth of men, social prestige and power over others. Men select jobs based on the priority level of their careers. Men are admired when they pursue careers with considerable opportunities unlike those who do not have these.
- **Show no chinks in the armour** – men are expected to display an iron man persona. Being physically tough suggests never backing down from a physical fight. Men are expected to avoid displaying emotions based on fear, sadness, nervousness and uncertainty. Projections of anger, confidence and stoicism are instead accepted.
- **Being a man's man** – this calls for men to be 'one of the boys', and expects men to gain the admiration and respect of other men and to be seen enjoying the camaraderie of other men. Men are expected to participate in stereotypically man-related activities, such as watching sport and enjoying beer. Being one of the boys is considered a reward since men gain access to informal networks and other resources linked to professional advancement.

3.4.4.3 Men and working hours

Men suffer from the pressures of working in a full-time capacity in support of their family and to maintain the powerful force even when they do not have a family (Sheridan, 2004). Since there is a good probability for men to receive higher earnings, families suffer financially when dads request family leave to take care of children and this results in feelings of fear endured by men in relation to advancing their careers. Men in professional and managerial roles suffer from the pressure of sustaining organisational norms when contributing long and consuming work hours in the workplace (Sheridan, 2004).

3.4.4.4 Men, domestic and work roles

According to a study conducted by Gunter and Stambach (2003), nearly half of the men participating in the study experienced difficulty and angst in balancing domestic

roles with work roles because of a lack of opportunity provided to men within domestic roles. Men tend to suffer from guilt and sadness over insufficient time spent with their children (Gunter & Stambach, 2003). On a personal basis, men experience a slightly higher level of subordination and discrimination due to conditionings from a young age on expressing authority only, as compared to women who are able to show feelings of suppression and inequity (Sahgal, 2007). Feelings of subordination and discrimination experienced by men attributes to integral hierarchical structures in the organisation and the strong emphasis that it has on stringent rules. Men are prone to exhibit demanding behaviour, expectations and control since they are regarded as the head of the family. In some instances, the head of the family suffers from feelings of captivity in the workplace especially when this individual is unable to experience opportunities to expel authority (Sahgal, 2007). Men requesting assistance in leadership and authoritative roles are viewed as less competent, while women within superior roles endure no negative effects (Lebel, 2016). According to Cunningham-Parmeter (2013), men in organisations suffer from harassment when requesting paternity leave, are belittled for accompanying spouses to medical appointments and are ridiculed for staying at home with their sick children. Men engaging in flexible work hours prove to be more productive in their jobs. They produce high work performances, are able to cope with heavy workloads, have fewer absences and have low levels of personal stress and burnout (Cunningham-Parmeter, 2013).

According to Cunningham-Parmeter (2013, p.258), masculinities demand that a “real man with children must prove that he is not nurturing, not dependent and, not vocal about his work–family problems”. Men engaging in these behaviours face immediate sanctions and are viewed as disobeying the male code (Cunningham-Parmeter, 2013). In the past, surveys indicated that nearly one third of working fathers refused the chance of a new job, promotion or a transfer since these kinds of opportunities served as posed threats in the reduction of family time (Gilbert, 1993). In order for women to attain success and equality in the workplace, men are required to assist in exerting extra effort in the home front. Men are likely to suffer from employment retaliation by work colleagues once they enter the domestic area (Cunningham-Parmeter, 2013). A rising number of men attempt to eradicate traditional gender

stereotypes by assuming responsibility for their children while their spouses assume responsibility in the workplace (Porter, 2014).

3.4.5 Gender inequality attributes in females

Due to historic experiences and oppressions, women used to interpret their working journey as different from that of men (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012) despite the pivotal and important role that work played in the lives of women (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010). Gender equality raises questions about whether women are treated equal to men or whether the variances in men and women are acknowledged and supported (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Women continue to experience gender inequality regardless of the professional and managerial jobs they occupy (Perrons, 2009). According to Fine (2002, cited in Segalo, 2015, p.74), many women continually experience a “presence of an absence”. The presence of an absence refers to past times when women had no opportunities in the workplace. However, the presence of the working women in organisations today seem to somewhat display pretences since they continually confront challenges that are directly linked to the fact that they are women (Segalo, 2015). According to Segalo (2015), women progressively dominate government organisations with an unquestionable presence and continue in an effort to confront their daily experiences (Segalo, 2015). Gender imbalance creates a belief within the gender system that assumes that the men of today are the sole breadwinners in the home. Women are partially assimilated into the masculine working world and are working incoherent hours, coupled with an imbalance in the work–life balance (Perrons, 2009).

3.4.5.1 Women and the lack of organisational benefits

Up until the 1980s, organisations neglected gender because employees were viewed in two ways: from a gender-neutral (masculine) perspective; and from a view that considered only male employees (Sheridan, 2004). Irrespective of full-time employment, women are still expected and ever ready to offer the care and nurturing that her family needs. Mothers at times, more than fathers, offer nurturing and prefer to remain at home when their children are sick. Women are inexplicably affected by family choices and experience feelings of anxiety, loss of paid leave days, wage

gaps and even job loss due to time taken off from work in order to fulfil the caregiver duty (Sahgal, 2007). The lack in family-friendly policies is destined to witness women leaving the organisation to continue family responsibilities (Tanden, 2014). Women of today still believe that value should be placed upon building strong relations with children rather than earning large sums of money (Berne, 1990). Some women oppose the concept of long working hours and are instead blamed for refuting their rights to higher levels of responsibilities and revert to settling for desk jobs relevant to regular working hours (Sahgal, 2007). Owing to familial responsibilities, women are in desperate need of acquiring flexibility, combined with excelling within the organisation (Berne, 1990). Women report discriminative treatment due to a lack of assignments, projects, promotions and horizontal mobility's. Women, who receive inadequate training, are placed at a disadvantage in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities as well as in exercising professional activities (Sahgal, 2007). Men, on other hand, who receive training, find it highly beneficial to their current jobs and future positions in the organisations. Gender role stereotyping and discrimination barricade the specialisation of women resulting in societal isolation and limiting opportunities (Sahgal, 2007). Ogunleye and Babatola (2013), argues that, even though women contribute to more than half of the organisation's population, only a small number of women are essentially placed into professional careers as many are placed into mediocre, administrative or secretarial positions.

3.4.5.2 Women's physical and psychological well-being

Feminine behaviour is seen as females expecting to be saved from someone else. This often leads to implications of helplessness and indecisiveness, leading to attempts in suicide (Reppen, 1985). Reppen (1985), associates attempted suicide to a feminine act because of the increasing attempts made by females rather than males. Intrapsychic theories, contrasted to attempted suicides and self-conflict, are traced back to Freud in (Reppen, 1985). According to Reppen (1985), Freud indicates that suicidal tendencies are as a result of a personality defect involving a weak self-structure, a tendency to over-identify with loved ones and problems with expressions of hostility. Personality defects are influenced by self-destructive situations, such as loss and denunciation (Caneto, 1989). According to Berne (1990), hard work is not a foreign concept to women; thus, the freedom of choice

within their lives has brought them nothing but hectic, fragmented and complex lives. Women today are more affected by mental stress than by physical stress combined with the negative toll that stress places upon them (Berne, 1990). Mental stress is the result of “unclear role definitions, guilt, a lack of support and the emotional stress inherent in a life of multiple roles and conflicting responsibilities” (Berne, 1990, p.56). The health of women is affected negatively by discriminative gender issues, such as no promotions, a lack of job responsibilities, a lack of recognition and the non-consideration for positions solely meant for women (Zevallos, 2013).

3.4.5.3 Women and domestic roles and work roles

As compared to their male colleagues, women sometimes regard themselves as weak, powerless and inferior to males. This pattern of thought is deeply ingrained in every cell and tissue of a woman's body and mind because of past oppressions, which were once placed upon them. Women of the world are continually associated with domestic realm responsibilities, some of which are nurturing children, caring for the elderly and keeping the domestic arena functioning smoothly (Raghunandan, 2018). Major economic gains contributed by women are regarded as unequal in nature. Women who move into organisations with minimal male dominance are still seen as inferior and suffer from their employment through low-paying jobs that are either secretarial, nursing, teaching or sales representatives (Tanden, 2014). Despite economic contributions made to society, women remain confined to the expertise in the domestic sphere, irrespective of whether the domestic sphere operates smoothly and efficiently (Raghunandan, 2018). In an interview, Gunter and Stambach (2003) reported that during a conducted study, women claimed that they continually encounter many difficulties with balancing work and home commitments. When compared to their male co-workers, women dedicated more time towards household chores and childcare combined with organisational work roles, which amounted to an average of eighteen hours a week. Most women have grown to survive work and family life although some women find it impossible to maintain a family life and juggle a career at the same time (Gunter & Stambach, 2003).

According to Hare-Mustin (1988), men are able to afford the luxury of expending family time or working from home to catch up on work and recuperate from

occupational stress while women experience hardships in balancing family and work roles. For mothers, the lack of childcare produces barriers with regard to family obligations, coupled with their own needs, represent an imposition in the workforce (Parsons & Bales, 1955). Hare-Mustin (1988), claimed that gaining a sense of overall wellness and self-esteem are far-gone as long as women are subjected to job restrictions, minimal employment opportunities and low-paying jobs with little or no autonomy. Men are advantaged into operating solely on one sphere (work) while women are disadvantaged into operating on two spheres (home and work). Operating in two spheres identifies the in-separateness and inequality of the two spheres leading to an increase in workload and obscured versions in the dual roles of women (Hare-Mustin, 1988). According to Sahgal (2007), a man's belief of the homemaker role is the primary role of any woman thus creating doubt that questions the commitment of a woman toward her work role. Men believe that, due to a woman's gender, she is favourable in positions that allow her to be easily pardoned from confronting hardships on the job, meanwhile men fail to realise that women are subjected to states of subordination and discrimination (Sahgal, 2007). The majority of women today are working women, mothers and managers of their own homes, which leads to the question regarding the lifestyle of women and whether their choices are based on economic necessity, economic preference or career advancement and intellectual fulfilment (Berne, 1990).

Irrespective of the choices made, women reap and manage consequences attached to husbands, childbearing, community work, shopping, household chores, cooking, work and career advancement (Berne, 1990). In demand of being treated equally to men, women find themselves working the same number of hours as men do to succeed at the same level as men. Employers of women display apathy in sharing any interest or responsibility when faced with familial requests from women (Berne, 1990). Women accept that, due to the dominance of males, including social status standings, many women are not inclined to sustain the capacity towards daily functioning's and upkeep on the home front (Berne, 1990). Male management regard men as more competent towards the different spheres of work, such as leadership and management roles, and when compared to women and without apprehension, management considerations often lead to the gender segregation of women (Zevallos, 2013). Women are inclined to denunciate the prospects of climbing the

corporate ladder and are instead condemned for their lack of interest towards requesting promotions. According to studies conducted by Zevallos (2013), it was discovered that when promotions are discussed, male applicants are favoured over highly qualified women who have the same amount of training, experience and working hours as men. Women who possess qualifications have high expectations in terms of professional fulfilment and are often unhappy when they stagnate within current and lower-level job roles. It is evident that organisations are structured around the needs of men since men are highly favoured and their efforts are rewarded while the professional contributions made by women are disregarded by organisations (Zevallos, 2013).

Women experience wage gaps and a reduction in salaries due to them being women compared to male counterparts (Wallen, 2015). Women feel punished by organisations after giving birth, since some organisations believe that the dedication of women may lie fully in the child and not in the job. Women affected by this belief assert the need for management to gain an understanding that birthing a child (or not birthing) does not mean that their unique skills are affected (Wallen, 2015). Women experience challenges in traditionally male-dominated arenas when attempting to excel within their careers. According to Martin and Barnard (2013), women face further challenges in the home environment as it poses a picture of male-dominated gender roles, which cause a spillover into organisational policies and practices to maintain marginalised work roles of women. Most of the time, women are left to cope when organisational policies fail to accommodate or support them during situations, such as working conditions within traditionally male-run organisations (Martin & Barnard, 2013).

Rao and Kelleher (2003, p.144) identified the following four interrelated factors that support organisations against the employment of women, since prestige, power and control obscure the reality that organisations are gendered at deep levels which prevent women from challenging institutions:

- **Lack of political access** – there are no systems to address the perceptions and interests of women.

- **Lack of appropriate accountability systems** – organisational resources are directed towards quantitative targets, which are correlated with organisational changes for gender equality.
- **Cultural systems** – work–family life averts women from participating fully in the organisation as most women continue to maintain responsibilities towards children and the elderly.
- **Cognitive structures** – work is regarded as existing within gender-biased norms and understanding.

3.4.5.4 *Women and the glass-ceiling effect*

Cultural beliefs argue that the weaknesses of women are contributed to the historic beliefs of sexism as a contributing factor to gender inequality (Garcia, 2016). Based on historic perceptions, the negative stigma attached to women coincides with the popular concept of the glass-ceiling effect, Acker (2006, cited in Stainback, Kleiner, & Skaggs, 2016). This term refers to the challenges of unconscious discrimination that women face in the workplace, and is a metaphor that was introduced to reveal invisible processes (Stainback *et al.*, 2016) that barricade and restrict women from attaining access to organisational positions (Ogunleye & Babatola, 2013). The glass-ceiling effect denotes the isolation and discouragement experienced by women, while the responsible men continue to provide them with little or no opportunities, regardless of academic qualifications and job experiences (Garcia, 2016).

According to Ogunleye and Babatola (2013), this effect constricts women even more as it ensures the rarity of female mentors to assist new female employees who are entering the organisation and the impossibility of bonding and seeking advice regarding work experiences from male mentors. A metaphor that of “the sticky floor effect” (see Ogunleye & Babatola, 2013, p.42), is used to describe the prevention of women from climbing the corporate ladder and aiming towards highly placed positions (Ogunleye & Babatola, 2013). Women who create psychological glass ceilings reflect internal and societal stereotypes, feel less qualified, feel discouraged due to a lesser sense of entitlement and eliminate risks that are prone to creating psychological glass ceilings (Rarieya, 2013). Female managers are often subjected

to feeling victimised based on gender bias. Gender bias experienced by female managers is ascribed to self-owned assertive and authoritative behaviour that often results in resistance and hostile reactions received from subordinates where the careers of female managers suffer when placed in difficult positions due to mismanagement and reactive backlash from subordinates (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004).

3.4.5.5 Women in leadership positions and women disempowerment

Female leaders often project mismatched notions between qualities traditionally associated with male leaders and those associated with women today (Rarieya, 2013). Male leaders who display assertive and authoritative behaviour are regarded as strong and firm leaders whereas such behaviour by female leaders are regarded as having unattractive and abrasive qualities (Mayer, Tonelli, Oosthuizen, & Surtee, 2018). Women who sustain organisational negativity either abandon the leadership race or resort to junior positions manifesting assumptions that women are less committed and less worthy of being trained and are incapable of managing challenging projects. Apart from females who are negatively affected, there are some female leaders who resonate with the queen bee syndrome (Rarieya, 2013). Reality indicates that women possessing the queen bee syndrome fail to cooperate with female subordinates (Acker, 1990). Queen bees struggle to support female subordinates and their career advancements (Rarieya, 2013), and instead abuse their power and use it in oppressive ways, they create their own status structures, and are at loggerheads with women who display nurturing, affectionate and supportive characteristics (Acker, 1990).

3.5 GENDER TRANSFORMATION

In this section, gender transformation is defined, and organisational gender transformation, gender transformation and gender transformation projections are discussed.

3.5.1 Gender transformation defined

Gender transformation is defined as a development that seeks to go beyond the warning signs of gender inequality in order to address the social norms, attitudes, behaviours and social systems that underlie those (Hillenbrand, Karim, Mohanraj, & Wu, 2015). The gender approach is aimed at the interaction and critical exploration of groups, the challenging and questioning of gender norms and the power relations that underlie gender gaps (Hillenbrand *et al.*, 2015). Gender transformational interventions make use of gender sensitive approaches primarily to promote gender equality while working with organisations to identify, address and positively transform the underlying root causes, both conscious and unconscious, of gender inequality in men and women. Gender transformative approaches dynamically endeavour to examine, question and change rigid gender norms and the imbalance of power (Morgan, 2014). According to Morgan (2014), these approaches, furthermore, encourage critical awareness among men and women relating to gender roles and gender norms, they promote the positions of women, challenge the distribution of resources and the allocation of duties between men and women and address power relations between women and others within communities. Transformational approaches operate to weed out social orders already established in gender inequality between men and women (Morgan, 2014). In concurrence, Hillenbrand *et al.* (2015) describe gender transformation as an approach motivated to move beyond the individualistic progression of women, and is directed at transforming power dynamics and structures serving to reinforce gender inequalities instead. Transformative changes are quantified through the exploration of three broad spheres of empowerment as follows:

- agency – individual and collective capacity;
- relations – expectations and cooperative dynamics entrenched within relationships between the individual level, group level and organisational level; and
- structures – the formal and informal organisational rules that oversee collective, individual and organisational practices, such as the environment, social norms, recognition and status (Hillenbrand *et al.*, 2015, p.5).

3.5.2 Organisational gender transformation

Organisational gender transformation is a new universal building block since it is a knowledge-based network. Organisational gender transformation is aimed at promoting organisational change by means of encouraging development organisations to evaluate gender relations in societies in which males and females work and in environments that require challenging (Rao & Kelleher, 2003). According to Acker (1990), organisational gender transformation built on the redefinition of work and work relations indicate that work life inside the organisation is adapted to the rhythm of life outside of the organisation. Organisational transformation recognises the importance of employees who are valued irrespective of giving birth, attending to sick family members, building a car or designing software (Acker, 1990). Gender inequality is institutionalised via leadership in which individuals, such as managers, have the ability to influence and motivate employees positively towards attaining organisational goals (Veldsman & Johnson, 2016). As role models, leaders are responsible for influencing organisational structures, processes and practices, for organisational culture, setting of policies and strategy and for motivating and communicating organisational policies to employees (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Research emphasises the importance that gender plays in the association between work and organisations (Plickert & Sterling, 2017). Men and women are driven to share various work activities equally with the abolishment of hierarchical levels (Acker, 1990). Gender inequality in organisations is visible through organisational structures, processes and practices. The harmful attributes of gender inequality affect hiring, training, salary and promotions and is most prominent in human resource practices, such as policies and decision-making (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015).

Organisations that create stressful situations are the reasons why employees alter careers and employment schedules resulting in intensifying gender inequalities amongst professionals (Plickert & Sterling, 2017). Human resource practices in terms of gender inequality stem from broader organisational structures, processes and practices, including those of leadership, structure, strategy, culture, organisational climate and human resource policies (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Sexist decision-makers allow levels of sexism to affect gender-biased decisions by

behaving in sexist ways. Organisational structures, processes and practices affected by organisational discrimination will in turn affect human resource practices by providing a social platform for hostile and benevolent sexism from organisational decision-makers (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Gender roles are embedded in organisational structures (Plickert & Sterling, 2017), in rules, hierarchical levels, job descriptions and administrative processes (Ridgeway, 2007) through workplace design (Plickert & Sterling, 2017). Work processes shaped by organisational gender biases enhance inequalities in organisations on one hand, while on the other hand, organisational structures and administrative processes suppress the biasing effects of gender stereotypes. Equitable accountability, formalised personnel procedures and open information relating to reward structures are welcoming of a reduction in the organisations gender inequality quota (Ridgeway, 2007). Organisational structures (those that view gender as an individual trait or social identity), practice settings or size (large firms) and personal life events (marriage and family) silhouette the careers of men and women in different ways (Plickert & Sterling, 2017). Gender is not understood as the burden of a man or a woman only. The permissance of behavioural changes in men and women will assist in accelerating change and minimising gender inequalities within organisations. A suggestion for organisations towards encouraging men and women to work together as collaborators in altering organisational norms and structures is to positively promote any gender gaps (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009).

Gender transformation assesses historical attempts of organisational development programmes in order to mainstream gender at the current level and in working environments as well as to develop programmes and processes to challenge organisational norms working against the interests of the workforce (Rao & Kelleher, 2003). Gender mainstreaming contributes towards organisational transformation and is defined in terms of transformation that is reflected in all policies, programmes, administrative and financial activities and within organisational procedures (De Waal, 2006). Gender mainstreaming is a strategy involving assessing implications of planned actions for men and women (De Waal, 2006), such as legislation, policies and programmes in all areas and at all levels (Cohen, Moser, Taylor, & Cortes, 2014) ensuring that concerns and experiences are a fundamental element in advancing equally, where gender inequality is not promoted (De Waal, 2006).

Gender mainstreaming is further identified as a deliberate, planned and intended strategy that is used for transforming gender throughout society, including the organisation, its programmes and its projects (De Waal, 2006). Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that is aimed at cementing the “design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all organisational, political, economic and societal domains so that men and women benefit equally to reach the definitive purposes of gender equality” (Cohen *et al.*, 2014, p.7). Organisations are encouraged to consider gender and sex differences in all areas of organisational policies, programmes and practices, including the protection and promotions of workers. Gender-based approaches comprise a systematic tool synchronising design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and practices (World Health Organization [WHO], 2011).

3.5.3 Gender transformation

This section discusses gender approaches, perspectives and actions towards achieving gender transformation.

3.5.3.1 Gender approaches

Two organisational approaches in attaining gender equality as put forth by (Rao & Kelleher, 2003) are a gender infrastructure approach, and an organisational change approach. *Gender infrastructure approaches* are basic infrastructures comprising organisational gender policies, a gender unit of skilled individuals formulating organisational programmes, gender training and developing gender analysis tools while adopting family-friendly policies, such as flexi-time and workplace childcare (Rao & Kelleher, 2003). *Organisational change approaches* involve constructing organisational capacity to dispute gender-biased institutional guidelines, such as democratising relationships amongst employees, making the voices of men and women equally powerful in the workplace, welcoming decision-making from employees and searching for ways to increase connections with other organisations to enhance gender equitable agendas (Rao & Kelleher, 2003). The approaches prove ineffective when the real purpose of the approaches is misplaced. Many advantages remain independent of the larger contextual forces while continually

maintaining unequal gender relations without confronting the inequitable trigger effect of unequal gender relations (Rao & Kelleher, 2003).

3.5.3.2 Gender perspectives

Haspels and Suriyasarn (2010, p.15), propose three gender equality perspectives: the sameness perspective, the protectionist perspective, and the equality in outcomes perspective. The *sameness perspective* aims for equal treatment of men and women in spite of biological gender differences. This perspective is gender-blind and contradicts its purpose due to disadvantages against women. Women face dissimilar social and economic realities compared to those of men. In an attempt to achieve successful male standards, women find themselves overburdened and disadvantaged by subordinate gender roles, multiple responsibilities and a lack of access resources where only a few women are privileged enough to compete with men on an equal footing (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). *Protectionist perspective* suggest that unsafe and unsuitable work, such as atypical work life, night shifts, working over weekends and overtime, should be avoided by women since they are regarded as “the weaker sex” (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010, p.15). According to Haspels and Suriyasarn (2010), the protectionist perspective endorses protection from sexual harassment and instead promotes sexual discrimination in the form of protection rather than confronting the roots for the subservience of women in order to deliver a safe working environment for all workers. The *equality in outcomes perspective* is a corrective perspective and acknowledges the differences in men and women while simultaneously underlining the necessities of equality between them. It analyses reasons for gender inequality while aiming to obtain equality and seeking to eliminate the discrimination of disadvantaged groups through corrective and positive measures at individual, organisational and societal level (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010).

3.5.3.3 Gender actions

There are three fair and equitable strategic actions as identified by Mena (2016) for implementing in organisations as follows:

- *Train employees to identify and reduce biases* – training, within an organisation, is imperative and is necessary for employers to offer training to employees to tackle the effects of unconscious bias. The manner in which employees perceive and interact with each other is dependent on how biases are identified. Organisations benefit directly and indirectly from training that managers and human resource employees receive, enabling organisations to identify and reduce biases. Recruitment and promotions provide fair and equitable opportunities to men and women for an inventive and productive workforce (Mena, 2016).
- *Implement clear and structured criteria for hiring and evaluations* – it is proposed that formal criteria be developed by recruiters and human resource officers. Formal criteria assists in the potential that new employees are obligated to meet in order to be considered for positions. Using formal criteria during performance evaluations provides raters with mechanisms to identify biases. Due to favouritism, raters are advised against evaluating employees of the same gender to avoid skewing the employee evaluation. Reviewing and modernising outdated practices and recruitment evaluation policies assist in making better decisions in the long term (Mena, 2016).
- *Enforce accountability and transparency* – unbiased choices are highly avoidable when decision-makers and individuals are aware of future repercussions of choices. Managers who are accountable for choices ensure that all decisions are ethical, justifiable and recorded (Mena, 2016).

Adding to Mena's (2016) fair and equitable strategic actions, Lang (2003) reverts to the implementing and maintaining of organisational policies. Organisations that prepare standards for how equitable organisations are structured as well as their behaviour manages to sustain long-term relationships with the government, civil society partners and individuals (Lang, 2003). It is only through relationships where organisations project the acts of "walking the walk" rather than just "talking the talk" (Lang, 2003, p.11). In order for organisations to maintain gender equitable norms, organisational policies, such as gender competencies for staff, paternity leave, flexible working hours, childcare facilities and enforced sexual harassment policies are suggested for implementation and publication. Such norms require formulation by a competent gender team comprising men and women (Lang, 2003). According to

Lang (2003), gender teams ensure that adequate space and privacy be provided for members to discuss personal and difficult issues faced by men and women and that the issues brought forward are discussed with a team member from the same gender group. Through equitable principles and policies instilled within processes, practices and documentations, employees are able to display flexibility of gender roles, equality of voice and decision-making and benefits of partnership (Lang, 2003). The role and responsibility of organisations lie within the standards that they set, and the key role for any organisation is the evolutionary surety in the choices and roles of men and women allowing flexibility through thoughts and actions (Lang, 2003).

3.5.4 Gender transformation projections

The following projections are considered in respect of the various gender transformation projections.

3.5.4.1 Organisational policies and practices

Some organisations, together with human resource policies, do not effectively echo flexible gender norms pivotal to good developmental practices. Employees are continually faced with negative consequences relating to organisational benefits, such as paternity leave, sexual harassment, inflexible work or child policies, many of which are not welcomed by organisational policies (Lang, 2003). According to Lang (2003), recruitment activities are based on biased organisational policies, which ensure that men occupy senior management positions. Affirmative action policies for the recruitment of women become an issue, which results in the arising of tensions between men and women. An organisational culture climate exposes the behaviour of employees regardless of the existence of strong gender-informed policies (Lang, 2003). Organisational policies that are subjected to fair and equitable gender practices ensure that different outcomes for men and women are yielded (Davaki, 2016). The promotion of affirmative action helps to remedy the effects of the past and any continued discrimination. Effective and opportunistic treatments in the practice of levelling the playing field for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups are established to attain gender equality (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). A holistic and

structural approach to gender needs requires action where policies address the gender gaps between families, the labour market, political and social security, to allow men and women to escape the gender trap (Davaki, 2016).

3.5.4.2 Organisational gender training

Gender training is an organisational strategy exercised to assimilate gender into work practices. It is a facilitated procedure of developing cognisance of gender-related issues to bring forth personal and organisational change for gender equality. Gender training is a mechanism used to raise organisational gender awareness, gender-awareness planning, programme design and implementation (Reeves & Baden, 2000). It involves group discussions as well as reflections on gender roles and relations, case studies regarding the effect of organisational policies and programmes in gender relations, role plays and simulation games highlighting gender dynamics (Reeves & Baden, 2000). According to Reeves and Baden (2000), tailored gendered training and courses are introduced as awareness grows and thus the effectiveness of training intensifies when it is part of a broader strategy of organisational change

3.5.4.3 Family policy

Men and women included in the formulation of family policies are able to provide advice on real choices regarding the pattern of preferred work. Universal career models accommodate family life and leisure, and deal with individual childcare and elderly needs. Parental leave policies have the capability to transform gender roles if suitably constructed or they can project the reverse result if limited to mothers only (Davaki, 2016). Fair and equitable parental leave provides fathers with equal prospects to care for and to spend time with their children. According to Davaki (2016), fathers benefit from parental leave that offers high rates of compensation, and which are individually entitled and flexible and mothers benefit from affordable day care and school for the children in accordance with working hours, after-school services, flexible parental leave, teleworking and contractual conditions. Such benefits permit mothers to remain active in an increasingly competitive labour market and to maximise control in their lives (Davaki, 2016).

The use of good practices for embedding gender equality policies fairly into the policies and programmes of the organisation is suggested (Limanowska, 2013). Good practices are methods and approaches that function in a productive and efficient manner resulting in coherent results. Good practices deliver and disseminate transformative and effective strategies into the organisation through gender mainstreaming (Limanowska, 2013). Limanowska (2013) identified the following tested methodology that is used for identifying, assessing and describing good practices:

- set assessment criteria for appraising good practices, such as flexible and transferable criteria for future practises in evaluation; and
- use descriptive template that aids with good practices in an equivalent manner.

Good practices that blend well welcome transformations in organisational processes and practices while reaching gender equality goals (Limanowska, 2013). An organisation that promotes gender equality will reflect the following:

- equality of opportunity and treatment in employment;
- equal remuneration for work of equal value;
- equal participation and representation in governance and decision-making processes and mechanisms in the economic, social and labour fields;
- freedom of association and protection of the right to organise;
- a balance between work and family life, which is fair to both men and women;
- equal access to safe work, including maternity benefits; and
- equality in obtaining a meaningful career advancement and development (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010).

3.6 GENDER ROLES: INEQUALITY AND TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS A SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC INTEGRATION

In (Barbieri, 1999), Freud's century old theory regarding the unconscious and infantile sexuality was primarily based on male-biased concepts. Freud's one-sided theory was based solely upon masculine attributes and the attempts of this theory to combine biology and psychology with the anatomy of man (Barbieri, 1999). Freud's

belief based on the “anatomy is destiny” (see Barbieri, 1999, p.73) suggests that masculinity and femininity are the outcomes of biological sexual maturation and not of the social background and upbringings of children where they are taught to exhibit gendered characteristics (McMahon, 2012). The birth of a child brings forth gender differences in some cultures since birthing a son in the family results in celebratory acts whereas the birth of a daughter in the family incurs feelings of a burden. This clearly indicates that families who are discriminative against sex falls under the societal discriminator category resulting in the development of hurdles in society (Shastri, 2014). Chodorow (1978, cited in Popa, 2016), identified that the upbringing and childhood of either a boy or a girl differs socially and according to different social patterns since daughters and sons are predominantly raised by their mothers due to the absence of their fathers (Popa, 2016).

Chodorow (1989, cited in Barbieri, 1999) argues that the accepted togetherness that girls feel with their mothers is long-lasting as opposed to boys who seem to instead reject togetherness and oneness from their mothers, which results in a mature and separated path to masculine identity. According to Aldridge, Kligo, and Jepkemboi (2014), those women who strived to retain their identity while being good wives and mothers were viewed as mystically feminine by Freud. Freud’s comparison between men and women entails that women have a lesser sense of justice than men, are flooded by jealousy and shame, are vain and unable to succumb to life’s conditions and do not contribute to society (Aldridge *et al.*, 2014). Freud and Young-Bruehl’s (1990) sexist and demeaning views against women persisted and resulted in Freud’s labelling of a woman as a “defective man” (Aldridge *et al.*, 2014, p.23). Chodorow (1978, cited in McMahon, 2012) further claims that Freud’s unsupported proclamations are merely statements about how men and women should be. The rationality of Freud’s ideas based on women are questioned since those ideas do not exhibit the experiences of women (Barbieri, 1999). The perception of the male-in-the-mind and the female-in-the-mind, often result in a specific set of behaviours, because males and females are perceived in a particular positive or negative manner (Barbieri, 1999).

According to Foschi (1996), in organisations, achievement-oriented women are labelled as unreliable combinations resulting in the arising of weak assumptions

where failure is viewed as a consistent outcome for women but not for men. Men are treated leniently and are overburdened with more job tasks regardless of the same level of performance attained by women (Foschi, 1996). The archetypal leader, inevitably a man, is often deemed as competitive, tough, aggressive, objective and emotionally deficient. Men and masculinity are taken for granted based on so-called male-related characteristics (the male-in-the-mind) which is unquestioned in the organisation (Lowe *et al.*, 2002). From a general perspective, the view of men from an aggressive perspective is regarded as unfair when some organisations support aggressive behaviour, like in certain roles in the military. According to Lowe *et al.* (2002), the remedy of the situation is to understand that the root cause of such behaviour may not be constructed in the organisation, but rather in masculine personages of leaders. The encouraged forms of masculine and feminine behaviours result in how men and women view themselves. The solution to inequalities is not to advance more men or women, but to address the deep-rooted, often unconscious sources of such behaviours (Lowe *et al.*, 2002).

The transformation from gender inequality to equality includes the restructuring of uncertainties – from being traditional to avoiding the focus of Freud's theory on sex and gender towards everyday practice. Nowadays, sex and gender are consigned as a distinct feature, apart from the usual operations of the mind in the way that Freud envisioned (Balsam, 2016). Freud's theory is chauvinistic, anti-women and inspires the young to assume that male genitalia are superior to those of females (Lowe *et al.*, 2002). Contributions made by psychoanalysts Chodorow (1989), Horney (1967) and other feminist psychoanalysts (such as Applegarth, 1976; Gilligan 1982) provide a constructive and gendered perspective involving the expansion of the male and female sense of self and identity. Traditionally, psychoanalysis and the feminist theory (see Lowe *et al.*, 2002) opposed theories based on studies excluding women and their progression. Mahfouz and Smith (1994, p.9, cited in Lowe *et al.* 2002) oppose theories based on the segregation of women, and claim that the assimilation of psychoanalysis and the feminist theory empowers individuals to endeavour towards the transformation of gender in both males and females. Lowe *et al.* (2002) recommended that managers use their authority relations in the interest of positive gender-specified outcomes. Managers are propelled to create and encourage supportive and dominant forms of gender-specified expectations due to the

imperative need to eliminate discriminatory and anxiety-ridden organisations (Lowe *et al.*, 2002). The support from managers in creating gender equitable organisations is likely to contribute holistically toward the elimination of repressive situations where employees feel obliged to conceal qualities of themselves due to gender-specific issues (Lowe *et al.*, 2002).

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, gender role experiences and gender transformation were discussed. This chapter commenced by discussing gender, followed by exploring gender roles, gender experiences and gender transformation towards a system psychodynamic integration. The chapter concluded with a summary.

In the next chapter, the research methodology of the study is presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This aim of this chapter is to discuss the research methodology that was used in the study. The chapter commences with a discussion of the qualitative research approach, which is then followed by a description of the research strategy. The chapter ends with discussions surrounding the research method pertaining to the research setting, entrée and establishing researcher roles, sampling, data collection methods, recording of data, analysis, strategies employed to ensure quality data and ethical considerations that were applied in the study.

4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study made use of the qualitative research approach. The qualitative research approach is defined as a process based upon the distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore human social problems (Isaacs, 2014). According to Isaacs (2014), the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of participants and conducts the study in a natural setting. Qualitative research involves the collection of data that cannot be expressed numerically (Anderson, 2010). The aim of qualitative research is to seek answers to questions, as well as to handle non-numerical information and phenomenological interpretation. The qualitative research approach enables individuals to define, make sense of and to recognise definitive patterns among words allowing them to build up a meaningful picture without compromising the richness and dimensionality of the qualitative research approach (Leung, 2015). This approach was selected because it represents broad and pervasive challenges and maintains a deep understanding of context, diversity and nuances with potential and highly valued processes (Mason, 2002). This approach was also selected because qualitative inquiry seeks to understand the social world in which people live – in the context of this study, gender experiences and gender transformation, and why things are the way they are (Hancock *et al.*, 2007). It would have been virtually impossible to describe gender

experiences from a systems psychodynamic perspective, if the study was conducted from a quantitative approach since a quantitative approach uses statistical techniques whereas the qualitative approach studies the behaviour and experiences of people (Hancock *et al.*, 2007). Thus, qualitative research seeks answers to the following questions:

- Why do people behave the way they do?
- How are opinions and attitudes formed?
- How are people affected by the events that go on around them?
- How and why have cultures and practices developed in the way they did? (Hancock *et al.*, 2007).

Some characteristics of the qualitative research approach, which made it appropriate for this study, are the following:

- Qualitative research makes use of flexible and spontaneous interactions between the researcher and the participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).
- Qualitative research uses descriptive and explorative methods since it ventures into unexplored and descriptive circumstances within literature (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).
- Qualitative research encourages the use of case studies, naturalistic observations, surveys, interviews and focus groups (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005).
- Explorative data, which is used in qualitative research, is gathered directly from the human experiential perspective enabling the data to be represented more realistically and allowing for further detailed and in-depth examinations, as compared to statistical data (Anderson, 2010).
- Qualitative research is found in all social sciences and applied fields (Anderson, 2010).
- Qualitative research is considered useful as it focuses on complex issues, such as human behaviour, felt needs (Isaacs, 2014) and the various ways individuals view the social and psychological reality (Hancock *et al.*, 2007).

- Data that is retrieved from qualitative research is difficult to manipulate since it is based upon the human experience and presents information about the behaviour of people within their natural setting (Hancock *et al.*, 2007).
- Qualitative research is exciting and important, and it exposes itself to new opportunities in a fast-paced, complex and multi-dimensional social world (Mason, 2002).

4.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research strategy for this study was explorative and qualitative in nature (Zainal, 2007), and was undertaken in the form of a case study, as this provides an understanding of the research problem (Dudovskiy, 2016). A case study design was used because this design served an instrumental role in understanding the phenomenological experiences of my participants as well as gaining valuable information pertaining to the study (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Each participant contributed deeply towards the study through their phenomenological experiences which gave these experiences profound and evocative meanings (Churchill, 2018). Using exploratory case studies allowed me to present data based on real-life situations while providing insights into detailed behaviours of the participants (Zainal, 2007).

4.4 RESEARCH METHOD

The research methodology focuses on the research setting, the researcher's role, sampling, data collection methods and recording and analysis of the data, the strategies employed to ensure quality data including all ethical considerations. Next, these methodological considerations are discussed.

4.4.1 Research setting

The research study was set within a government organisation based in Gauteng, South Africa. The organisation was at a point of change within its leadership roles. This change introduced a period of unpredictability within the organisation, and a

struggle for some employees to cope with the changes, even with the new management. Employees within micro positions were experiencing extreme pressure to prove their worth while changes were concurrently implemented. Confidence levels continually dropped and stressful situations often brought out the worst in both managers and staff. The office space of the participants was a natural setting, which enabled participants to feel most relaxed and comfortable. The researcher physically visited the natural setting of the participants to observe and record behaviour as well as responses to questions asked. The setting within which such behaviours occur (Atieno, 2009) often influences the behaviour of humans. Participants who experienced discomfort with this setting were accommodated in a quiet, secluded boardroom.

4.4.2 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

The researcher's entrée in this research study was facilitated by her role in the same organisation as the participants. In qualitative research, research is transported via the human instrument, in this case the researcher. The researcher, within this study acted as an etic, meaning that the researcher maintained an objective view (an outsider's perspective). The researcher adopted the role of an objective observer during probing questions in interviews, listening to responses followed by more probing questions in order to converse with and understand the participants and their experiences on a deeper level (Simon, 1999). The researcher remained aware during the scientific and ethical implementation of the research. The researcher consequently adopted the roles of interviewer, analyst and interpreter.

4.4.3 Sampling

In this study, convenience and purposive sampling were used. **Convenience** sampling involves a selected participant or a group of participants based on their availability to the researcher (Allyn & Bacon, 2008). In the current study, participants were selected in relation to their convenient accessibility (Martinez-Mesa, Gonzalez-Chica, Duquia, Bonamigo, & Bastos, 2016). **Purposive** sampling involves the selection of particularly informative or useful participants (Allyn & Bacon, 2008). This sampling is used when a diverse sample is necessary or when the opinion of experts

is required (Martinez-Mesa *et al.*, 2016). Three men, four women and one transgender comprised the participants within the current research study. All participants were between the ages of 28 and 40 years old. These individuals formed a diverse representation of the organisation, where they were permanently employed, and purposefully represented the age, gender and race composition categories. All the participants had been employed by the organisation for a minimum of five years, had extensive knowledge and experience and were willing to share their phenomenological gender-based experiences and stories from their personal capacity. A description of the participants is provided in the table below.

Table 4.1

Demographic description of participants

Participant	Race	Age	Gender	Role	Code
1	Indian	39	Female	Finance officer	RC001
2	African	33	Female	Administrative officer	RC002
3	White	28	Female	Vetting officer	RC003
4	African	38	Female	Administrative officer	RC004
5	African	37	Transgender	Forensic investigator	RC005
6	White	40	Male	Call centre consultant	RC006
7	Indian	38	Male	Functional analyst	RC007
8	Coloured	29	Male	Unit head	RC008

4.4.4 Data collection methods

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were used as the primary source of data collection for this study. According to Jamshed (2014), interviewing is one of the most well-known forms of data collection in qualitative studies. Qualitative interviews are founded on well-recorded, challenged, achieved and reinforced practices and standards (Jamshed, 2014). The qualitative research interview used in this study was an hour-long semi-structured interview. This method was selected because semi-structured interviews allow for further clarification, probing and cross-checking (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005) of pre-set open-ended questions (Jamshed, 2014). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews provide a wealth of information, are inexpensive and efficient (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005). Open-ended questions enable

participants to elaborate on their responses and to allow for follow-up questions from the researcher (Salkind, 2014). Follow-up questions were asked based on the responses of the initial research questions. This type of questions should be asked by always keeping the research question in mind. Some of the research questions were as follows:

- What is your experience as an employee (being male or female) within this organisation?
- To what extent does gender play a role in how you experience the workplace?
- What are the effects of gender inequality (if it exists) on you as an individual within the organisation?
- How can the organisation transform from a place of gender inequality to one of gender equality?
- How can the organisation benefit from gender transformation?

4.4.5 Recording of data

Data were collected using a digital voice recorder. Once the interview process had been concluded, the researcher transferred the data onto a personal computer, which was not linked to a network. This was to safeguard the data received from participants and to anonymise the identities of the participants (Fangen, 2015). Pen and paper were used to record any significant observations.

4.4.6 Data analysis

The researcher made use of thematic analysis which is compatible with the hermeneutic methodology due to its interpretative nature (Fangen, 2015). Hermeneutic methodology was used as it resonated with the subjective experiences of the participants in an endeavour to reveal their world as it is lived through their experiences and worldly stories. The valued interpretation of the participants introduced a descriptive and interpretive process in an attempt to illuminate their silence. Hermeneutic methodology explored the experiences iterated by the

participants and enabled the data to be analysed using the hermeneutic circle by means of reading, reflecting and interpreting the data (Kafle, 2011).

The researcher assimilated the understanding of the hermeneutic circle together with the six phases of the thematic analysis as follows:

- reading and re-reading data and making notes for familiarisation with the data – the researcher researched and read literature pertaining to the study and particularly its research questions. The data collected from the interview was analysed by reading, re-reading and making notes.
- collating data – the researcher organised the data by using a meaningful and methodical coding system.
- searching for themes – the researcher analysed and collated the data under specific themes which were later organised into broader themes.
- reviewing the themes – the researcher checked and re-checked themes against the original text from the interview process to decipher questions pertaining to the themes.
- defining and naming themes – the researcher analysed the meaning of each theme and identified its sub-themes.
- producing the report by extracting the final analysis, which directs back to the research question and literature – the researcher described the themes and sub-themes with reference to the research question (Rennie, 2012).

4.4.7 Strategies employed to ensure quality data

Trustworthiness was ensured through the activities of confirmability, transferability, credibility, dependability and ethicality as follows:

- *Confirmability* – the researcher checked and re-checked the data several times (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). The researcher remained an observer (Shenton, 2004). In this study, the findings were as a result of the responses that were gathered from the participants and not as part of the researcher's biases or perspectives.
- *Transferability* – the researcher ensured transferability through detailed accounts of experiences (thick description) that are provided to the reader to determine whether it applied to their situation or not (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). In this study,

the participants provided a thick and detailed description of their experiences through their responses.

- *Credibility* – the researcher reports on the data in an accurate manner, which expresses the experiences of the research participants (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). In this study, the responses of the participants were reported as accurately as possible by the researcher.
- *Dependability* – the researcher reports on a detailed process within the study to ensure that the research can be repeated in future by other researchers, which would yield the same results in some studies (Shenton, 2004). In this study, the research findings were consistent. The research methods provide a thick description of information allowing for the repetition of research at a later stage regardless of how unique the situation is.
- *Ethicality* – the researcher requested that the participants sign an informed consent form. The researcher further ensured that the participants were free from coercion and that they understood the option to withdraw at any time from participating in the research study (Marczyk *et al.*, 2005). In this study, the participants signed an informed consent form. The informed consent form discussed the aim and purpose of the study, the nature of the study and the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

The researcher remained aware of her own feelings and experiences during this study, to ensure that the data received was feasible. The researcher developed a rapport with each of the participants which allowed her to remain neutral at all times in order to allow the participants to express their own experiences (Churchill, 2018).

4.4.8 Ethicality

Ethical clearance (ethics reference number: 2018_CEMS/IOP_016), refer to annexure A, was received from the University of South Africa (Unisa), as well as voluntary and signed informed consent forms were obtained from all participants. The information obtained from the participants was treated with extreme confidentiality. The anonymity of the participants, as well as that of their organisation and relevant departments were respected and safeguarded in order to avoid them

being harmed in any way. No information was used in any way to inflict any damage toward participants. Paper-based information was accessible to the researcher only and will be retained in the private home office of the researcher where it will be securely stored and locked away within a drawer and protected in accordance with data protection regulations (Hancock *et al.*, 2007). Computer-based information is also accessible to the researcher only, and is stored on a password-protected computer. Participants were protected from any physical and psychological harm in which the researcher offered to postpone the interview if a participant experienced anxiety or any other medically-related problem. The researcher provided further psychological support in cases where the participant felt nervous or stressed (Salkind, 2014).

4.4.9 Reporting of findings

The findings are based on a micro level and the current situations, research questions, research design and all other critical factors were examined to enhance the ethicality, reliability and validity of the study (Lowhorn, 2007). The findings are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this study.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research methodology was discussed. This chapter commenced with a discussion of the qualitative research approach, which was followed by a description of the research strategy. The chapter concluded with discussions surrounding the research method pertaining to the research setting, entrée into the organisation, establishing researcher roles, sampling, data collection methods, recording of data, analysis, strategies employed to ensure quality data and ethical considerations that were applied in the study.

In the next chapter, the findings of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the various systems psychodynamic themes and sub-themes that emanated during the study are presented and discussed. This chapter commences with the presentation of the themes, including the raw data (as evidence) and support from literature. This chapter concludes with a summary.

5.2 PRESENTATION OF THEMES

The following themes and sub-themes emanated from the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Table 5.1
Main and sub-themes

Main themes	Sub-themes
1 Male and female gender role experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxieties • Gender collusion • Male and female as objects
2 Transgender role experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxieties • Being a hostage in the paranoid-schizoid position • Oscillation of the depressive position • Experiential role: the 'defended' employee
3 Defence mechanisms against the anxiety of being 'different'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narcissistic defences • Immature defences • Neurotic defences • Mature defences
4 Systemic influences on gender role experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundaries • Social systems
5 Organisational gender transformation (equity) interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational policies and practices • Organisational culture • Diversity training

5.3 MALE AND FEMALE GENDER ROLE EXPERIENCES

In this section, the following themes, sub-themes and constructs which emerged are discussed, namely anxieties (in the form of performance anxiety, persecutory anxiety, survival anxiety) and the paranoid-schizoid position and depressive position.

5.3.1 Anxieties

Participants reported experiencing different forms of anxiety, which were triggered by negative perceptions and experiences in the organisation. The anxieties expressed by participants are discussed in this section.

According to Freud (1949), anxiety is the uncomfortable feelings which influence the ego to evade danger, thereby attempting to reduce discomforted feelings (Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 2008). In this study, anxiety is defined as a predominantly unconscious state with feelings that are accompanied by an unconscious response to an internally elicited danger situation (Wong, 1999). Regardless of the source, patterns of anxiety are difficult to adjust to and are potentially destructive. Patterns of anxiety are either the result of something that may transpire or as a result of something that has transpired (Arneson, 2010). According to psychoanalysis, anxiety presents existential threats as opposed to rational fears, which inevitably trigger destructive actions in order to diminish problems (Handy & Rowlands, 2017). According to Lonsdorf et al. (2015), females are more prone to experiencing anxiety and fear disorders, as well as projecting severe symptoms and impairment in comparison to men.

5.3.1.1 Performance anxiety

Performance anxiety manifested when female participants felt the need to perform successfully in all matters of their job tasks. Some felt competent enough to do the requested work, but experienced a lack of control over their work when the time arose for providing inputs, while others felt extremely incompetent. Please note that all direct participants' contributions are reproduced verbatim and unedited. One female participant shared the following example:

I feel that because I am a woman I have to continuously prove myself leaving me feel incompetent. The harder I perform, the more I have to prove myself (RC003).

Another female participant expressed that female participants value themselves and hold themselves (females) in high regard as nurturers. She posed the following question:

Who will nurture us [women] when we have a breakdown? (RC001).

Female participants were concerned in respect of their contribution towards work tasks. They sensed that the distribution of work was not fairly allocated and that their tasks were of a mediocre nature compared to the stimulating tasks provided to male colleagues. One female participant said the following:

We [women] are always provided with administrative and desk-related duties whereas our male co-workers are given opportunities that are challenging. It is amazing as to how 'useful' we are in our homes as compared to organisational work (RC004).

Perhaps what is projected onto females is that they are only good enough for certain administrative tasks, as opposed to the exclusive leadership domain reserved and preserved for males. Males experienced being bombarded regarding job challenges, and assistance from females was sought, but men chose to keep quiet for fear (anxiety) of facing gendered consequences and the likelihood of demotions and discrimination. Some male participants experienced feelings of incompetence in raising gendered issues. They explained that men in general rarely displayed outward expressions of fear, but they mentioned projections driven by ego and felt ineffectual due to feeling fearful of repercussions, inevitably triggering anxiety. However, one of the females shared the following:

I feel worthless being in an organisation that does not value my worth, my presence and my opinions despite my endless performance [...] on the rare occasion when I'm requested to do minor tasks I always question myself on whether I'm doing things right as compared to my male counterparts (RC001).

It sounded as if both females and males experienced performance anxiety and that there was not one set of homogenous experiences for females and another set exclusively for males. Another female participant responded as follows:

I enjoy the downtime that we [females] gain, but we have to try much harder in any job role or task than our male counterparts before we are taken seriously (RC002).

A male participant provided another perspective when he said the following:

I feel as though I'm a worker bee. I'm constantly working and trying to stay balanced and neutral to do what's needed to get the job done (RC007).

Performance anxiety reflects a long-lasting and impeding problem that immobilises many employees from attaining their full potential (LeBlanc, Chang, Obert, & Siivola, 1997) while continuously serving as a primary threat to the psychological well-being of individuals. Performance anxiety is experienced by employees due to attributed high self-expectations, which involve agonising about the negative effect of excessive physical arousal prior to or during work performance (Osborne, Greene, & Immel, 2014). Females experience a higher level of performance anxiety when positioned in potentially stressful performance conditions compared to men (LeBlanc *et al.*, 1997). In this study, LeBlanc *et al.*'s (1997) finding that females experience a higher level of performance anxiety was therefore confirmed.

5.3.1.2 Persecutory anxiety

Another strong theme, which emerged, was that both male and females feel that they are being persecuted, and hence experience what is known as persecutory anxiety (Handy & Rowlands, 2017). Persecutory anxiety is defined as the feelings with which an individual resonates, which are directed towards the strong beliefs of being attacked, and which include fears of annihilation or rejection by others (Handy & Rowlands, 2017). Female participants felt persecuted by their continuous efforts with an outcome of not being taken seriously. They felt dim-witted, unacknowledged and demoralised as male colleagues preferred to engage in instructions from male leaders as opposed to female leaders. Females experienced similar organisational stressors, as suggested by female participants. One of the female participants provided the following example:

We [females] have to express ourselves forcefully and repeatedly before our input is heard leaving us feeling and looking like puppets [...] I feel undermined, as male employees would rather take instructions from male supervisors as compared to female supervisors (RC003).

The same participant shared the following:

I feel in order to gain recognition I need to think, feel, act and talk like a man. I need to project a stern, unemotional and firm personality. It's like the organisation wants me to lose myself. When I'm disregarded by my male leaders I feel fearful of losing of my job. I sometimes walk my dog in order to clear my head and to release all my frustrations (RC003).

Despite the sense of overload and stress suffered by males, their choice to remain tight-lipped was due to the unpredictability of their future and cross-questioning over their manhood. Two male participants expressed the need for collaboration and togetherness in the workplace. They did however realise the need to follow a transactional process in order to alleviate internal and external stressors from the organisation. A male participant shared as follows:

I feel angry but also I feel the need to just keep quiet and not give my inputs when I don't agree with something, as I fear the consequences thereafter (RC008).

Another male participant added the following:

The work that men do seems overrated whereas the work from women is overlooked. That in itself causes more stress than ever as we [men] have to constantly prove ourselves, otherwise we are considered weak, not good enough or losers (RC006).

Gender status beliefs are therefore influential, as men are honoured because they are men and not only because of power or wealth. Male leaders are perceived as being more capable on the job when compared to female leaders since males exert more influence (Ridgeway, 2014). Individuals suffering from persecutory anxiety anticipate danger and feel threatened with accompanying distresses, such as delusional distress and depression. Depression is reinforced when affected individuals believe that persecutors are extremely powerful (Freeman, Garety, Kuipers, Fowler, & Bebbington, 2001).

5.3.1.3 Survival anxiety

Survival anxiety manifested when some male and female participants expressed the fight for financial stability and security for their families. The thought of not being able to provide for their families financially triggered instant cases of survival anxiety. Two male participants felt that, in order to retain a sustainable income, they would choose to sacrifice any ideas of career advancement within the organisation. They feared the risk of probing in terms of their future advancements as they feared that it was risky and therefore they chose to remain neutral. A male participant shared the following experience:

As a man living in these economic times, I feel that I need to do what is best to survive. It's unfortunately not about me or my career advancement, but only about sustaining my family and myself. I have to sacrifice my own needs to fulfil the well-being of my family (RC007).

Another male participant shared the following:

As a man, I'm aware that women are quite capable of being financially secure, but 'as a man' I feel that it is my duty to provide for my family even if I'm not the sole breadwinner (RC006).

A single mum found it hard to sustain her family in these times of economic hardship and chose to remain neutral in fear of losing the little that she earned. This single mum (RC004) felt that, regardless of her feelings of unsafety within the organisation, she was not fully equipped to be an open target for fear of being questioned and publicly discriminated against in terms of her femininity. She realised that her needs would have to be altered according to her survival even if it was not the best choice, psychologically and physically. She shared the following story:

Single mums have a hard time in fulfilling two parental roles. I have to ensure that I'm financially able to provide for my family with a single income. I feel deprived of many opportunities, I feel that I'm not earning as much as I should be because I'm a woman, I don't feel protected due to being a woman and I can't really rely much on promotions or career advancements either. In order to survive, it feels like the organisation would like for me to become a man and to display all its wanted and needed manly attributes (RC004).

Survival anxiety or annihilation anxiety is described as a mental matter that mirrors trepidations over survival, preservation of the self, and the capacity to function (Hurvich, 2003). Survival anxiety arises due to the fear of loss that one experiences owing to the self's unconscious and conscious aspects and physical and psychic aspects (Hurvich, 2003). As reflected in the participants' stories, individuals are subjected to feelings of threat, danger and harm in the external world with fantasies of vulnerability, rejection, annihilation, separation and subjugation (Robinson & Gadd, 2016).

5.3.1.4 Paranoid-schizoid position (anxiety)

The paranoid-schizoid position is an inherent part of our human condition (Van Eeden, 2010). However, through the stories and experiences of participants it was as if they remained in this position for sustained periods of time, which is obviously not conducive to psychological well-being (Cilliers & Stone, 2005). Notably, a male participant, RC008, displayed obvious signs of the paranoid-schizoid position. He attempted to participate and stay connected to his everyday work life but did not fully interact with many of the other employees. He remained uninterested in forming any social relationships and preferred to be alone. His mood appeared different during a telephonic conversation compared to the face-to-face time. He expressed deep disappointment related to the organisation. This male participant (RC008) shared the following emotional story:

Throughout my life I've felt like I've had to face this world alone. I accept being alone, but yet I still feel that my solo efforts can make a huge contribution to the organisation. I felt an ounce of confidence during an interview, only to find out that it was handed over to a female. I was the best candidate according to the assessments that were conducted. I feel that females are given promotions easily due to past gender issues and discrimination. I feel, robbed, betrayed and hurt by the organisation as they have not even once considered my efforts. When I actually thought that I was getting somewhere, I was unfortunately disappointed again. I feel like there is no trust in the organisation as many try to work against each other. I often wonder if it is me. I wonder what must be wrong with me. Am I not good enough? Maybe I'm not good enough for this organisation, or maybe the organisation is not good enough for me (RC008).

The term 'paranoid' is used to describe bad experiences that are external to the individual's self, whereas 'schizoid' is the splitting and outward projection of self-perceived badness resulting in external figures that are both hated and feared (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012). The paranoid and schizoid projection together constructs a state of illusory goodness and self-idealisation (Cilliers & Stone, 2005). The paranoid-schizoid position is recognised for its delusions of persecution trading off with delusions of grandeur (Kiley *et al.*, 2015). The problem with paranoid-schizoid individuals is the inability to maintain a stable mind that is free from conflicts (Hinshelwood, 2015) since these individuals continually believe that they are victims of harassment and conspiracies (Kiley *et al.*, 2015). According to Clarke (1999), Klein (1988) claims that this position is not regarded as a developmental stage through which individuals but rather a position that could return at any time when stress and anxiety are prevalent in one's life. The narrative provided by the male participant is an excellent example in this regard.

5.3.1.5 Depressive position (anxiety)

A female participant, RC001, presented with signs of the depressive position. On one hand she expressed feelings of sadness, emptiness, hopelessness, worthlessness, low self-esteem and tearfulness, but on the other hand she expressed feelings of awareness, gratefulness and guilt towards the organisation. This female participant constantly reflected back on past failures and experienced feelings of guilt, shame and self-blame. Apart from psychological distress, she suffered from physiological issues relating to sleep patterns, constant tiredness, lethargy and headaches. The participant shared the following:

I feel like my role in the organisation is worthless. I continuously try and try and yet come out with non-achievements. Being a woman in the organisation is tough as I feel victimised. On days when I feel extremely anxious and emotional, I'm looked at as though it's a 'woman issue'. I sometimes think that being a woman is driving me crazy. Men don't understand that it's not just me being over-emotional, irrational or mentally weak. I feel disempowered, silenced and weighed down with emotional labour, as well as financially disadvantaged. However, as a wife and a mother, I too am trying to continuously do the best that I can. My family is my safe space, with them I feel like a butterfly, I feel that I can let go and be free with them. I feel as

though my whole world revolves around the same routine feelings. I try to set good examples for my children, but yet I feel so much anger when I think of the treatment I face every day. However, once again, despite my feelings I am grateful towards the organisation as it provides me with a constant source of income. I sometimes feel ashamed and guilty by my mere emotions and thoughts towards the organisation. I wish that I could go back to a time in my life when I was much younger, with no responsibility and when things were so much easier (RC001).

According to Cilliers (2005), the depressive position is described as a reconciliation difference carried over from the paranoid-schizoid position. Klein (1988, p.435, cited in Clarke, 1999) claims that the depressive position is not a split but instead it is a combination of experience where the perceptions of people contain both good and bad. The depressive position encompasses fear and greatness in anxiety regarding the ability of this position to make reparation for the fear and anxiety that was shattered in phantasy in an attempt to restore the shattered object (Clarke, 1999). The depressive position is seen as the “individual hates the hating self” in an attempt to repair and make amends for the damage caused (Clarke, 1999, p.29). Change is likely to occur when the emotional state is endured long enough to reflect on the feelings, meanwhile encompassing the anxieties that they stir up. The depressive position is never attained all at once. When survival or self-esteem is threatened, there is a propensity to revert to a more paranoid-schizoid way of operating (Cilliers, 2003a).

5.3.2 Gender collusion

Gender collusion also surfaced as another sub-theme during the analysis and interpretation of the data. Collusion refers to the relationship between individuals who unconsciously approve one another's conspiring behaviour (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016). According to Schruijer (2018), the unconscious and emotional reinforcements of gender collusion are unearthed with the assistance of the system psychodynamic perspective and need to be understood from a social system perspective and not as individual behaviour. Gender collusion is epitomised by a non-conscious group dynamic between two or more groups that work together to avoid a threatening and painful reality out of awareness (Schruijer, 2018). In a psychological sense, gender

collusion refers to a hidden dynamic among people. This dynamic engages in inherent and non-conscious alliances aimed at reciprocally satisfying hidden needs and warding off fear, such as finding approval, boosting one's self-esteem, avoiding rejection or exclusion and not being confronted with powerlessness or insecurity (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016). Colluding members experience difficulty in communicating regarding their agreements and despite working together privately. Gender collusion itself is not criminal, but could lead to inattentive and painful behaviour (Schruijer, 2018). In section 5.3.2.1 and 5.3.2.2, examples of possible collusive practices between females and males are provided.

5.3.2.1 Male perspective

The male participants felt that women benefited through organisational practices by colluding in the following ways:

- In reality, women advocated the expected standards set by society in an attempt to fulfil career objectives (Hodges & Park, 2013). A male participant felt –
[W]omen are privileged when it comes to taking time off from work to attend to familial responsibilities whereas we [men] are questioned about requesting time off (RC006).
- Men felt pressured into being successful achievers since any failure by women are interpreted as normal outcomes in comparison to men (Foschi, 1996). Another male participant shared that he felt as though the organisation did not permit men to pursue the options of being well-grounded fathers due to the never-ending work commitments and expressed the following:
We [men] also desire to experience the same opportunities as women, like family responsibilities, less work commitment, less pressure on being the breadwinner and more family time (RC007).
- Men felt that women were restricted when they exhibited communicative and supportive behaviour towards subordinates and when female leadership roles were rendered (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Men expressed concern and worry in respect of a woman's 'male-dominated' behaviour as manly behaviour is not considered desirable in women, although it is in men. A male participant further expressed his insecurity and inferiority due to past oppressions against women.

He expressed fear in presuming that women may seek grand gestures of empowerment due to past disadvantages and added the following:

We [men] feel discriminated and unfairly treated due to jobs that were allotted specifically for women in an effort to balance the gender gap within the organisation due to past oppressions. We feel that there is a covert mission between management and female employees in order to fulfil the employment ratios within the organisation (RC008).

5.3.2.2 Female perspective

The female participants felt that men benefited through organisational practices by colluding in the following ways:

- Female employees who were paid less than males felt inferior and they felt that their inputs were not as important as work provided by their male co-workers (O'Brien *et al.*, 2012). Women felt that specific jobs were uniquely and stereotypically set aside to benefit the men in the organisation. A female participant added the following:

[I]rrespective of possessing the relevant job skills and qualifications, the capabilities of women are instead continuously questioned whereas men are assumed to be more competent. Women feel isolated and underpaid in the organisation (RC001).

- The work time of men is significantly reduced, their work load is much less and their work is not as accurate as compared to the work of women despite the equal pay that men are provided (O'Brien *et al.*, 2012). Competency is intertwined with specific traits: intelligence, assertiveness and creativeness, and is based upon the perceived status which questions whether the competent person (male or female) actually possesses the ability to achieve competency (Otterbacher *et al.*, 2017).

The same female participant shared the following:

We [women] feel that men are paid handsomely as compared to us [women] and for the same type and amount of work. They [men] take extended lunch breaks with no regards for time and the time away from their desks is accepted and not questioned by management. We [women] don't even assume such behaviour as we are well aware of the consequences thereafter since we aren't allowed to conduct such behaviour. It is during times like this when the so-called 'policies' and work ethics are mentioned (RC003).

- Women felt as though they were perceived as less committed to work compared to men when they have to attend to familial responsibilities. Women who were employed by male-dominated organisations were more than likely to attract attention, they were assessed on an extreme basis, were perceived differently as compared to men, were less supported and were viewed as a disruptive force within the organisation, unlike their male colleagues (Bielby, 2000). Women, in this study, felt afraid to question the discriminatory behaviour and the unfair treatment received. The fear women expressed referred to irregular patterns in work punctuality and family leave, as managers perceived women to be even more incompetent than men in handling challenges. A female participant mentioned the following:

We [women] are afraid to disturb the 'bro-hood' due to the immune functionings of the organisation. We are considered warm and fragile by male leaders. We fear the unknowing consequences when we request time to attend to familial duties (RC004).

5.3.3 Male and female as objects

The notion of males and females as objects is the result of the historic teachings of society. Society shaped the mutual relationships, thoughts, words and actions of men and women. Men and women were taught to behave as objects, and in ways that attributed to their gender (Roque, Mayo, & Arteaga, 2017). This theme emerged after male and female participants had expressed their feelings of being regarded as 'things' or as objects within the organisation. However, within the paradigm of this study, an 'object' implies that it does not only relate to a person, but also to an organisation, a group, an idea or even a symbol since the object is not always a person (Czander, 1993). The person is seen to act, think and feel an internalised object-in-the-mind (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012, p.8), during engagements with the world as a reality. Object-in-the-mind is not an actual object or experience despite its real experiences by the individual (Hirschhorn, 1990), but it refers to the assimilation of organisations by means of aligning the identities, roles and tasks of others resulting in communicating and establishing relationships (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). The internalised object-in-the-mind on which the individual experiences are based is none other than his or her own external experiences with the outer world (Hirschhorn, 1990).

5.3.1.1 Male as objects

A male participant expressed his view on being regarded as an object in the organisation as follows:

We [men] are taken for granted by the organisation since society assumed us as the stronger sex in emotional, mental and physical ways. We are handed more tasks and are almost always under pressure and have not time for familial responsibilities (RC008).

Men are oriented towards productive and physical work – objects of production – while women are guided towards maintaining domestic chores, birthing, health care and taking care of family members, all of which are considered less valued than the ones carried out by men, since women are seen as objects of nurturing (Roque *et al.*, 2017).

5.3.1.2 Female as objects

Two female participants expressed their views on being regarded as objects of invisibility and as sex objects in the organisation. A female participant shared the following:

To a certain extent, we [females] are being 'used'. Our skills and talents are hidden within the organisation leaving us to feel invisible. Women are blocked from advancing their careers (RC002).

Another female participant concurred and added the following:

Men are reluctant to include women in work conversations. Their behaviour assumes their needs to take over completely in an attempt towards social divisions. ... Women have always been regarded as sex objects. Sex discrimination is quite rife in the organisation (RC001).

The manner in which women are viewed as objects in the organisation is directed towards those men whose conduct, characteristics and self-concepts are founded on historic gender stereotypes, those who project strength, power, authority and

influence over women in the organisation and towards those who are motivated to evaluate women visually (Szymanski, Moffitt, & Carr, 2011).

5.3.1.3 Transgenders as objects

A transgender participant expressed his view on being regarded as an object of derision, denigration and the proverbial 'cog in the wheel' in the environment. The transgender participant shared the following:

I feel like an outcast at work. Socially, I am isolated! I feel as though I am here only to get the 'work' done. I think that my chances at advancing in the organisation are dim as compared to my male and female colleagues (RC005).

Society is responsible for the stigma created surrounding transgender people. Transgendered individuals express fears relating to exclusion, anxiety around career opportunities and social stigmatisation as a result of their gender status (Ozturk & Tatli, 2016).

5.4 TRANSGENDER GENDER ROLE EXPERIENCES

In this section, the following themes, sub-themes and constructs, which emerged, are discussed, namely anxieties (in the form of performance anxiety, persecutory anxiety, survival anxiety, the paranoid-schizoid position and depressive position) as well as being a hostage in the paranoid-schizoid position, oscillation of the depressive position and experiential role being expressed in the form of the 'defended' employee.

Transgendered employees seem to have a unique experience of the workplace, which will become evident during this discussion. As discussed in Chapter 3 (see 3.3.1). Transgenders are individuals who experience a gender identity that is not associated with the sex assigned at birth (Byne *et al.*, 2012). Feelings of comfort and belonging are manifested when willing transgenders seek surgical transitions whereas others may decide to opt either for hormonal or surgical treatment (Nagoshi *et al.*, 2012). Professional experts are required to assist with the use of mental health services and to aid in exploring gender identity and in gaining comfort with gendered

self or preferred gender presentation. Further counselling supports questions on whether or not to transition publicly and to what extent (Byne *et al.*, 2012). Cauldwell (2006, cited in Gherovici, 2011) describes transgenders as brilliant, eccentric and borderline geniuses. Society's parochialism, social stigma and discrimination manifest as a magnitude of encounters related to the reeling consequences from mental health (American Psychological Association [APA], 2015). According to Fraser (2009), just like anyone else, transgenders experience issues of self and self-in-relation, autonomy and connection, identity and intimacy. The experiences encountered by transgenders are both psychologically and physically complicated due to differences between mind and body. Transgenders, like most individuals, suffer from internal and external issues, inner psychodynamics and out-in-the-world issues relating to negotiating identity with external reality (Fraser, 2009). These dynamics will become clear in the next section.

5.4.1 Anxieties

Transgenders experience anxiety in the same manner as most non-transgender individuals. Natural and healthy reactions manifesting toward supposed danger trigger various responses – physical, mental and behavioural changes, also regarded as cognitions, automatic arousal and overt behavioural responses (Osborne *et al.*, 2014). In 5.4.1.1, the anxieties related to being an employed transgender in the organisation (RC005), are reflected.

5.4.1.1 Performance anxiety

A strong theme emerged when this participant (RC005) felt the need to participate exceptionally in all faculties of his work environment. This unique participant felt that he had to prove himself more than the other employees and this was due to his gender identity. He further experienced that negative corridor gossiping is a norm when it came to gender identity. In order to silence the negative chatter within himself, he chose to be mindful instead and to keep busy with positive work aspects. Being mindful in his work performance and the way in which he conducted himself was what mattered most. His only fear was management and the probable

thoughtlessness should they be unable to see his true potential. In respect to his phenomenological work experience, this participant had the following to say:

When I look at others, I sometimes feel that they're under the impression that I'm unable to handle the tasks handed to me. I feel that society all of a sudden thinks that being transgender means that I am disabled, meaning that I'm incapable of handling challenges in the same manner that so-called 'normal' individuals would. I understand that I can't control what people think or say of me, but I can control what I choose to allow. I choose to keep myself busy as this is what makes me happy. Feeling and being treated like a human ... human is what makes a huge difference to me. I have too much energy to be sitting around and feeling sorry for how others choose to see me. My only fear lies in management and what their views are of me. I fear that they have a choice: to either use the fact that I am transgender against me or to accept me the way that I am. Nowadays society only seeks 'the norm' – but then again, what is normal? (RC005).

This participant acknowledged the projections onto him as being incompetent (disabled), which were split in terms of what is perceived as normal and what is abnormal. This participant had a way of accepting what to control and what he could not control, which indicated his self-authorisation; thus, he used busyness as a defence to alleviate anxiety. Anxiety unfortunately manifested due to the way in which he was viewed by management, which could in turn have mirrored the anxiety management experienced due to his transgendered identity and the uncertainty on how to manage or contain the anxiety.

Cognisance's and apprehensions that are experienced when requested to perform, include psychological manifestations of worry, fear of being negatively evaluated by others, overestimations of the likelihood and consequences of a negative evaluation of performance, and negative self-evaluation in relation to one's own high standards for performance quality. The onset of psychological manifestations brings forth physiological symptoms, such as racing hearts, nervousness, dry mouth, rapid breathing, sweating and dizziness (Osborne *et al.*, 2014).

5.4.1.2 Persecutory anxiety

This participant (RC005) felt that being transgender necessitated projected feelings and associations into all walks of life by him and by others. On more than one occasion, RC005 resonated with persecutory feelings in all phases of his life. He felt persecuted by his loved ones who simply failed to understand that his uniqueness is not about them but rather about him being the affected transgender. The organisational world felt like a huge, public place in comparison to the intimate little world of RC005. He believed that he was a vulnerable target and feared the consequences of raising concerns based upon the awareness of transgenders including awareness of his own identity. He understood that his gender identity was psychologically disruptive to those who did not want to understand or be a part of his uniqueness.

Being a transgender means taking every ounce of my soul and showing it off to the world. It means that I have to show it off to my parents who've had their own dreams and aspirations for me. I fear rejection and hatred from my parents because if they can follow through, it's much easier for anyone else to also follow through. I feel that the organisation would view me as a matter of 'shame' as my social identity may not resonate well with others or with the organisational culture. I feel persecuted, annihilated and rejected by my family and the organisation for not following society. I feel that my continuous efforts are taken lightly (RC005).

This participant experienced feelings of shame, the shame that the organisation introjected (transference). Shame demands to be covered due to its association with the vulnerability and suffering of exposure. Internalising shame (swallowing it) leads to failure in understanding and speaking about it (Ladany, Klinger, & Kulp, 2011). This participant further experienced shame in terms of his disappointment associated with being different. According to Bizjak (2018), transgenders are likely to resort to various modes of presenting and hiding themselves since their social identity may not be appropriately perceived by others. Non-identification of a transgender person's given social identity results in a psychological disruption as opposed to transgenders whose identities are accepted, resulting in strong feelings of acceptance and inclusion. Transgenders are efficient in constructing their own identity, especially in the workplace, but this is hampered due to the dialectic relationships between social identity, which are shaped by the organisation and the job (Bizjak, 2018). Persecutory anxiety is triggered by persecutory beliefs allowing

individuals to view themselves as sensitive and susceptible targets. Individuals who trust persecutory beliefs feel the need to be maltreated due to their previous behaviours. Furthermore, others and the world are viewed as antagonistic and intimidating on the basis of prior experiences, such as trauma (Freeman *et al.*, 2001).

5.4.1.3 Survival anxiety

Survival anxiety manifested in participant RC005 when dealing with associated fear of an affected job and finally job loss. The main goal of this participant was to sustain the peace within his work surroundings and to strive continually towards a better career. The thought of unemployment made him emotional because he associated it with his unique gender identity.

I don't feel the need to act out or address anything due to my fear of job loss. The idea of unemployment makes me angry, anxious, emotional and afraid to face the future. During these financially challenging times, I can't risk being unemployed. I feel that in order to survive my identity, I have to challenge things that are bigger than me like societal norms and family and friend expectations (RC005).

Annihilation anxiety or survival anxiety is increased by elements relating to ego function weakness, threats to self-cohesion, prevalence of disorganised and insecure attachment styles, and traumatic experiences (Hurvich, 2003). Survival anxiety is apparent during an affected individual's maturity stages, and is coupled with a deficient background of safety and difficulties in taking survival for granted (Hurvich, 2003).

5.4.2 Being a hostage in the paranoid-schizoid position

This theme manifested as signs of the paranoid-schizoid position by displaying little interaction with work colleagues. Participant RC005 remained in a silo of his own and avoided many conversations as he feared feeling hurt or hurting others. His loneliness was the result of feeling erased in which he felt as if his existence was denied. He expressed disappointment relating to the organisation and the lack of opportunities that he would likely not receive until society, including the organisation,

had a change in traditional thought patterns. He thus felt 'trapped' within the paranoid-schizoid position. The following experience explains this phenomenon:

For most of my life I've hidden who I truly am. There are times when I feel so lonely and so weird. There are thoughts that there are still those people who continue to make fun of me and my gender. I feel alone and despite being alone I feel that I can make a positive contribution to the organisation. I feel that any other person would be more likely to receive more opportunities than what I've ever received. The world says that we should be ourselves. It took me a long time to reveal my true identity and now that I've finally done that I feel robbed as society still refuses to understand or accept my true nature. I feel disappointed, saddened but mostly disappointed by the organisation. My other problem is that I'm mostly tired, tired of being stressed about how others are going to perceive me. Most of the time, I feel emotionally distanced and separated from myself and the world, as though a veil is placed between me and my surroundings (RC005).

The paranoid-schizoid position is witness to the splitting of individuals between good and bad with good being on the inside and bad on the outside (Mills, Gilbert, Bellew, McEwan, & Gale, 2007), or the other way around. The black and white temperament (splitting) of the paranoid-schizoid position allows for the streamlining of convoluted problems bringing forth a culture where growth is inevitable (Cilliers, 2003a). Anxieties relate to the survival of the integrity and fragmentation of the mind (Hinshelwood, 2015). A state of fragmentation is achieved and a movement to the paranoid-schizoid position is made once new theories and ideas are re-established. In conclusion, a psychic change implies flexibility in the mind (Lagos, 2007).

5.4.3 Oscillation of the depressive position

Participant RC005 also revealed signs of the depressive position. His depressive factor was owed to stigma and the lack of understanding from the people around him. This participant observed the façade that people staged around him as well as the conspiring during his absence. He felt that people perceived him as being weak, crazy and a lesser person. He felt that he was to blame for all that had occurred in his life. He expressed frustration, low self-esteem, a lack in confidence and hopelessness, but also confidence and wholeness when he was able to self-

authorise by accepting this part of his identity. This almost sacred oscillation was described as follows:

I don't feel worthwhile and I feel that prejudices make my life even more difficult. I face continuous struggles, 'so-called' abnormal circumstances in the organisation, personal relationships, academic achievements, mental well-being, social engagements and positive ways in which to cope. I feel very low when I can't be myself and when I'm out of my own space. As a transgender, I'm comfortable with the way I look and feel about my gender, but I know that others aren't as comfortable as I am since they mostly choose to act inappropriately. Initially, I was afraid to seek psychological intervention as I feared that I will be told that my gender identity is the cause of my depression. I don't have the luxury of being emotional as and when I please to be in the organisation. When I'm here, I have to be a whole different person, as though my 'status' is non-existent. I sometimes feel guilty and ashamed as I am forced to act as though my status is non-existent for the sake of the organisation (RC005).

Klein (1932, cited in Hinshelwood, 2015), argues that the depressive position is based upon the theme of love and hate. The integration of love and hate compromises oedipal parents, and establishes fears for the object, and for the protection of the object. The idea of reparation is to mend the impairments that are feared by the infant and which have been generated by his or her own aggression (Hinshelwood, 2015). Furthermore, sexuality is emphasised in a new and different way where a method of maximising love is for the subject to utilise genital sexuality. Sex is an augmentation of the loving side of the ego, whereas erotisation is regarded as a defence against hating and harming. Sexuality is used in a secondary way to restore the primary love for the object (Hinshelwood, 2015). Perhaps, paradoxically, from a psychoanalytical perspective, depression is not the result of loss but rather the inability to deal with loss or the inability to mourn (Davenhill, 2007).

5.4.4 Experiential role: The 'defended' employee

In his experiential (as opposed to his normative and phenomenological) role, participant RC005 appeared to experience his role as a 'defended' employee in the organisation. This experience of being a 'defended' employee was described as follows:

In my experiential role, it feels as if I have to defend myself all the time (RC005).

Defence mechanisms is a renowned concept where individuals are destined to use several mechanisms rather than adhering to just one. Defence mechanisms unknowingly support individuals in defending themselves against anxiety by using numerous defence mechanisms at the same time (Blackman, 2004; Meyer *et al.*, 2008). In this section, the projection, repression and dissociation relating to transgender gender role experiences are discussed.

5.4.5 Individual defence mechanisms relating to transgender gender role experiences

This section discusses individual defence mechanisms in relation to gender roles that was experienced by participant RC005.

5.4.5.1 Projection

Projection, as a strong sub-theme, emerged through participant RC005 when he attempted to alleviate his anxieties (counter-transference, or an attempt to give the projection back). He was disturbed by the way others project disability and incompetence onto him. In turn, he ejected emotions and experiences onto other people. This participant shared the following:

I feel that society all of a sudden thinks that being transgender means that I'm disabled, meaning that I'm incapable of handling challenges in the same manner that so-called 'normal' individuals would. I understand that I can't control what people think or say of me, but I can control what I choose to allow. I choose to keep myself busy as this is what makes me happy. [...] I'm comfortable with the way I look and feel about my gender, but I know that others aren't as comfortable as I am since they mostly choose to act inappropriately (RC005).

Projection is known for the expulsion of undesirable and rejected parts, feelings, behaviours and experiences, inherent in the system's unconscious, onto others. The projector projects bad behaviours and mistakes onto others rather than admitting them (Cilliers & Stone, 2005). The projector remains blinded by his or her mistakes

and flaws, and believes that they belong to the other (Cilliers, 2012). Participant RC005 projected feelings of badness to the outside of the self in order to yield a state of delusional goodness and self-idealisation (see Cilliers & Stone, 2005). This participant's projections were the result of uncomfortable anxieties, splits and other unwanted feelings (Rothmann & Cilliers, 2007). The projection that the participant experienced, made him feel like a 'defended' subject or employee.

5.4.5.2 Repression and dissociation

The participant felt that he had to repress himself. His fear of the future and its consequences triggered anxiety and anger in him. He repressed his anger and anxiety by refusing to show such feelings and felt he had to repress his true identity for the sake of others. He shared the following:

I don't feel the need to act out or address anything due to my fear of job loss. The idea of unemployment makes me angry, anxious, emotional and afraid to face the future ... [D]uring these financially challenging times, I can't risk being unemployed (RC005).

When I'm here, I have to be a whole different person, as though my 'status' is non-existent (RC005).

Repression is described as a defence mechanism that occurs without awareness (Cramer, 2000). As a continuing defence of guilt and shame, repression brings forth feelings of psychic numbness and a further split between good and bad (Cilliers, 2012). Repression either dismisses or suppresses ideas from consciousness, while isolation ignores disturbing affects (Bowins, 2004). This seemed to be the experience of participant RC005. He went on to describe how he felt dissociated and experiencing a disconnection from his co-workers, but used this coping strategy as a way to confront his traumas. Dissociation assisted in reducing his anxiety, fear and shame. He further shared the following:

I don't have the luxury of being emotional as and when I please to be in the organisation ... most of the time I feel emotionally distanced and separated from myself and the world, as though a veil is placed between me and my surroundings (RC005).

Dissociation forms part of neurotic defences and is delimited to a strict form involving a breakdown of psychological functions and drastic modification of one's own character (Bowins, 2004). It is a well-known psychological defence mechanism, which involves an actual separation of mental processes and extends along a spectrum from mild to extensive everyday expressions (Bowins, 2010).

5.5 DEFENCE MECHANISMS AGAINST THE ANXIETY OF BEING “DIFFERENT”

Another major theme that emerged was how defences are used to manage and contain anxieties associated with being different. This was to be expected because a variety of defence mechanisms are used as coping mechanisms to deal with negative emotions as experiences. As discussed in section 2.3.1.3, defence mechanisms play an important role in an individual's ability to maintain or regulate emotions (Bowins, 2004). This theme strongly indicates that within systems psychodynamic, anxiety operates as an indicator of internal distress and conflict contributing to the arousal of individuals into assuming innumerable defence mechanisms and shunning the experiences of emotional pain or conflict while controlling unacceptable impulses (Kenny, 2011). Another instrumental function that psychological defence mechanisms play is their role in mitigating negative emotions and at the same time restoring effects of healthy and well-balanced psychological minds (Bowins, 2004). Participants used defence mechanisms to serve as coping mechanisms when dealing with negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, stress, sadness and depression (Kiley *et al.*, 2015). Individuals are often unconscious of how they use defence mechanisms as coping strategies indicating the distortion and unreal images of themselves and their environments on a conscious level (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). Two distinct features of defence mechanisms are as follows:

- they operate from an unconscious level (affected individual is unaware of them); and
- they deny and distort reality in order to feel less threatened (Kiley *et al.*, 2015).

5.5.1 Narcissistic defences

Individuals with narcissistic defences are described as excessively self-absorbed, and they are worried about their own importance and unwarranted requests for attention and admiration (Peled & Geva, 1999). They attempt to appear self-assured, but are instead naïve, insecure and unable to retain binding relationships (Kiley *et al.*, 2015). They tend to project anger towards the opposition due to non-compliance of their drama around competition for acceptance. Narcissistic individuals are susceptible to threatening feelings – real and imaginary – resulting in subtleties of envy (Cilliers, 2012). Individuals who are unable to form any relationships with others remain imprisoned in their own narcissistic existence. They instead tend to withdraw from reality by becoming self-absorbed in a world of their own without satisfying the need to relate (Cilliers, 2012; Meyer *et al.*, 2008). Participants provided the following experiences of narcissistic defences.

5.5.1.1 Denial

Denial is expressed through the refusal to accept facts, the denial towards feelings, and the denial in gender differences as indicated by a female participant who provided the following example:

On days when I feel extremely anxious and emotional, I'm looked at as though it's a 'woman issue'. Men don't understand that it's not just me being over-emotional, irrational or mentally weak (RC001).

This participant experienced anxiety and emotions due to denial of her gender. She indicated that, due to her emotional state, men are in denial of accepting that she sometimes expresses herself through emotions, which does not mean that she is unable to carry out her daily duties.

Denial is a defence structure associated with the supposed bad parts controlling the self and rejecting bad fragmented experiences by using non-existent fantasy. In reality, anxiety is temporarily lessened when the supposed bad fragments remain part of the system's unconsciousness (Cilliers, 2012). Women are able to shed tears in abundance voluntarily and assume pleasure in the most affecting manner (Darwin,

1897). According to Klein, Heimann, Isaacs, and Riviere (2002), individuals isolate bad objects from any good parts where their very existence is further denied intensifying bad and painful feelings and frustration. During episodes of denial, the individual remains unconscious of the ego state that contradicts the current experienced state (Tonkin & Fine, 1985).

5.5.1.2 Splitting

Splitting is expressed in the following statements in which male participants indicate the ways in which women are perceived in respect of their capabilities.

As a man I'm aware that women are quite capable of being financially secure, but 'as a man' I feel that it's my duty to provide for my family even if I'm not the sole breadwinner (RC006).

Another participant shared the following:

I feel that females are easily given promotions due to past gender issues and discrimination (RC008).

In this study, men recognised the split between themselves and women when they admit that women are capable financially but they also felt that women benefitted easily through promotions. Men felt the split between being the main breadwinner and between easily benefitting from promotions because women were at one time not often selected for promotions.

Splitting is the result of strong and structural boundaries relating to the self (Clarke, 2009). Splitting occurs when anxiety and feelings of failure and shame arise to defend the individual against persecutory anxiety (Cilliers, 2012). Objects but also people, are classed into categories of good and bad, ranging from one extreme to the other (Bowins, 2004) while reducing manifesting anxieties (Cilliers, 2012). Splitting is the result of perceived good in some and bad in others indicating a clear split between good and bad (Cilliers, 2012).

5.5.1.3 Projection

The following evidence of projection indicates that the projections provided by participants are related to things and people, which they assumed were disturbing their peace. A female participant provided the following:

I feel that my male leaders don't fancy women and they will do whatever they can to keep us [women] down (RC003).

A male participant added the following:

I feel like there's no trust in the organisation as many try to work against each other ... [M]aybe I'm not good enough for this organisation, or maybe the organisation is not good enough for me (RC008).

Another female participant indicated as follows:

It feels uncomfortable to be around my male leaders and feeling as though they think they are victorious (RC004).

The female participants, in this study, projected the personalities of their male leaders through negative emotions, which were used to create distance from them. The male participant, in this study, projected blame upon the organisation and felt the organisation was not good enough for him.

Projection is the result of denied suppressed characteristics portrayed by people or attributed to them by other people's projections, in an exaggerated form (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). According to Cilliers (2003a), uncomfortable experiences are altered to appear as though they belong to another subsystem rather than to the self. Good and bad or unwanted emotions are then placed upon the target in order to create distance away from the discomfort (Cilliers, 2003a). At times, projection may be used as the instrument for placing blame upon management when work does not go the way employees would like it to go (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). The rise of tension and conflict occasionally leads to violent oppositions in others and in oneself (Meyer *et al.*, 2008).

5.5.1.4 Projective identification

A female participant felt that in order to form part of a masculine organisation, she was required to close the gender gap and transform herself to act, walk and talk like a man as she shared the following:

I feel in order to gain recognition I need to think, feel and act and talk like a man. I need to project a stern, unemotional and firm personality. It's like the organisation wants me to lose myself (RC003).

Projective identification is a defence of projecting unpalatable parts of the self onto some other (Clarke, 2009). It is when the subject, a part of the system, projects material onto the object, the other part, and further identifies with the projection (Cilliers, 2003a). In losing femininity, women would ideally project a false male persona with false traits. The recipient identifies with the projector's unwanted thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and the projector perceives the unwanted parts as belonging to the recipient. Inevitably, the actions of the recipient are adjusted according to the needs of the projector (Cilliers, 2012).

5.5.2 Immature defences

Immature defences are frequently confronted with severe stress, and include excessive cognitive distortions resulting in the actual impairment of reality testing (Bowins, 2004).

5.5.2.1 Introjection

A female participant felt the need to portray attributes from male leaders in order for male colleagues to take her seriously when delivering instructions as follows:

I feel in order to gain recognition, I need to think, feel, act and talk like a man. I need to project a stern, unemotional and firm personality (RC003).

Introjection refers to the absorption of values and characteristics by others into one's self, leaving the individual to possess the desire to be like somebody else (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). During the early stages of life, children identify with parents, and introject

values, norms and beliefs into their lives (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992). During the phallic stage and according to Freud, boys desire to be just like their dads. They wish to be big and strong, and to assume moral values and characteristics (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). In organisations, employees who unconsciously absorb the wishes of their leaders indicate their supportive behaviour towards their leader. Such behaviour encourages leaders to punish opponents bringing forth catastrophic consequences for independent perceivers (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992).

5.5.2.2 Regression

A female participant wished to return to her earlier life when things were carefree and simple, and reminisced as follows:

I wish that I could go back to a time in my life when I was much younger, with no responsibility and when things were so much easier (RC001).

Regression is the reversal or total return to the behaviour from earlier stages of development. Regression is known for its deceptive strategies, which are primarily used by children and pathological adults. When overlooked in children, regression becomes a natural and normal practice in adulthood (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992).

5.5.2.3 Passive aggression

One male participant expressed passive aggression by his feelings of betrayal and hurt despite his compliance and dedication towards the organisation. He continued to share the following:

I feel robbed, betrayed and hurt by the organisation as they haven't even once considered my efforts ... I feel like there's no trust in the organisation as many try to work against each other (RC008).

Individuals who display passive aggression handle emotional conflicts, including internal and external stressors, by expressing subtleness and unassertiveness upon others (Horowitz, Cooper, Fridhandler, Perry, & Vaillant, 1992). It is agreed that these personalities are indicative of turning anger onto the self (Vaillant, 1994).

Passive aggressors have the ability to mask covert resistance towards others with a front of overt compliance (Horowitz *et al.*, 1992).

5.5.3 Neurotic defences

Neurotic defences are those defences that are expressed by all individuals during difficult and testing periods in their life. Neurotic defences encompass an extensive degree of cognitive distortion as compared to mature defences. It represents frequent attempts to manage internally or externally generated stress (Bowins, 2004).

5.5.3.1 Repression

Most participants expressed fear relating to unknown consequences and refused to address any issues. One participant, a male, shared the following:

I feel angry but also I feel the need to just keep quiet and not provide any input when I don't agree with something as I fear the consequences thereafter (RC008).

Repression is responsible for transferring unacceptable drives, wishes and memories to the superego and to the unconscious (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). According to Freud (1936), repression is intended to blur out threatening material from the conscious mind indicating that repressed drives and wishes preserve energy and continuously attempt to break through to consciousness (Baumeister, Dale, & Sommer, 1998).

5.5.3.2 Rationalisation

A female participant expressed rationalisation between downtime received against their job efforts (referring to female workers) as compared to their male counterparts.

A female participant used rationalisation as a defence and said the following:

I enjoy the downtime that we [females] gain, but we have to try much harder in any job role or task than our male counterparts before we are taken seriously (RC002).

Females are not quite against receiving downtime but still find efforts challenging. Rationalisation is therefore an attempt made by an individual in providing rational explanations for his or her behaviour towards himself, herself or others, but which are not the actual reasons for the behaviour (Bowins, 2004). The individual finds it less threatening to blame a person or situation for incurred failures, and often denies the reality of the situation in order to make excuses and provide explanations. Rationalisation is not equivalent to lying, as individuals who rationalise are unaware of the reason for their behaviour, whereas lying is a deliberate action (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992).

5.5.3.3 Controlling

A male participant indicated the need to work continuously in order to alleviate associated anxieties, and expressed the following:

I feel as though I'm a worker bee. I'm constantly working and trying to stay balanced and neutral to do what's needed to get the job done (RC007).

A female participant indicated that she controlled her home life by continuously striving to do what is best for her family and mentioned the following:

As a wife and a mother I too am trying to continuously do the best that I can (RC001).

The male participant continuously managed his environment by controlling what he let in and what he did not let in. It seemed that he further allowed himself to be controlled by his environment despite over-extending himself. The female participant maintained control over her household and her children and managed to do her best. Perhaps the need and control to maintain busyness reduced any feelings of anxiety.

It would appear that controlling individuals attempt to manage or regulate the external environment excessively in order to steer clear of underlying feelings related to anxiety (Horowitz *et al.*, 1992).

5.5.4 Mature defences

Mature defences are confronted during an individual's midlife (Bowins, 2004). These defences comprise comparative and minor cognitive distortions bringing forth a host of unwelcomed experiences (Bowins, 2004).

5.5.4.1 Suppression

Suppression is signified by the way in which participants shift the attention away from themselves while maintaining awareness of themselves (Bowins, 2004). One female participant maintained awareness in the enjoyment of her free time and expressed her enjoyment towards having some downtime, but asserted that she had to work harder than men. She expressed the following:

I enjoy the downtime that we [females] gain, but we have to try much harder in any job role or task than our male counterparts before we are taken seriously (RC002).

A male participant asserted suppression by his understanding of how capable women are indicating his shift in attention away from himself. He then continued to add that to be a 'man' meant providing irrespective of whether he is the sole breadwinner or not, which indicated his awareness of himself. He expressed the following:

As a man I'm aware that women are quite capable of being financially secure, but 'as a man' I still feel that it is my duty to provide for my family even if I'm not the sole breadwinner (RC006).

Suppression is highly interrelated with mental health (Vaillant, 1994) and assists in moving away from and lessening the focus on disturbing intrapsychic states while maintaining some self-awareness (Bowins, 2004). Individuals handle emotional conflict and internal and external stressors with endurance by delaying and disregarding certain wishes, disturbing problems, feelings and experiences (Vaillant, 1994).

5.5.4.2 Sublimation

A female participant indicated her use of coping mechanisms to deal with her daily struggles as a partially satisfying method where minimal satisfaction is achieved (Nesse & Lloyd, 1992) and expressed the following:

When I'm disregarded by my male leaders I feel fearful of losing of my job. I sometimes walk my dog in order to clear my head and to release all my frustrations (RC001).

She added the following:

My family is my safe space, with them I feel like a butterfly, I feel that I can let go and be free with them (RC001).

Sublimation operates upon displacement actions and objects which are considered culturally valuable by society. Where art is channelled through sexual drives, aggressive drives channel energy to acceptable aggressive activities, such as sport or heroic war deeds (Reppen, 1985). According to Reppen (1985), acts of sublimation are owed partly to cultural activities. During sublimation, individual's articulate unacceptable base drives in an acceptable and valued manner resulting in the transcendent rise of lower drives (Blackman, 2004).

5.5.4.3 Humour

A participant reported making use of humour in her everyday life, especially when conversing about her boss. Most importantly, she made use of humour, the kind that smiles through tears, in her everyday life in an attempt to reduce anxiety and to flow through the day. She expressed her humour in the following way:

At times, I feel as though men are snickering around my womanhood and the fight for recognition. ... I sometimes feel as though life is a joke and that people are merely role players. ... I instead laugh it off and use it to counteract any negative emotions that I may experience (RC003).

In many situations humour is used as a method to break the ice in an attempt to make situations less tense and to make it easy going and lighter. The question is whether the joke is offensive towards anyone, especially the person at whose expense the joke was made (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012). The victim of the injury or

pain may attain humorous pleasure while an unconcerned person might laugh as a result of comic pleasure. Humour that is brought upon by emotions displays an undesirable personality and does not indicate any relation to the joke itself (Smith, 2010). Mature individuals are able to detach from their weaknesses and problems by laughing at themselves whereas immature and irresponsible individuals use banal joking and disparaging mockeries (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012).

5.6 SYSTEMIC INFLUENCES ON GENDER ROLE EXPERIENCES

In this section, boundaries and social systems, which seem to have a direct or indirect effect on how participants experience their respective gender roles in the organisation, are discussed.

5.6.1 Boundaries

Boundaries represent two attributes of the mind: the connection amongst various aspects of the mind, and the connection between the self and the outside world (Czander, 1993; Harrison & Singer, 2014). Boundaries are important for humans to be able to connect with each other and the organisation. Without boundaries relatedness and relationships are unmanageable as individuals become one – lost in each other and lost in the organisation and society (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). In this study, most individuals experience boundary issues relating to both personal boundaries and organisational boundaries where the sole purpose of healthy boundaries is for the individuals to protect and take care of themselves.

5.6.1.1 Personal boundaries

In respect of personal boundaries, participants reported feeling violated by the organisation and their family. Some participants experienced personal and physical boundary violations by close and loud talkers. One of the participants reported attempting to step back in order to regain his personal space but the loud talker did not comprehend the message that was being sent and this upset the participant to a point of discomfort and irritation. The participant felt an intrusion into his personal and intimate space and expressed the following:

The person I am does not allow for the invasion of my personal space. I feel terribly uncomfortable. When I'm placed in those situations, I feel angry and irritated as I cannot bear it. Despite my distress I have to unfortunately 'deal' with it due to the organisational environment. If I say anything then I'm told that I'm a sexist (RC007).

A female participant experienced “inappropriate and unwanted touching and hugging”. Her male colleague would approach her for a hug each time he visited her floor. She felt uncomfortable with the hugging from her male colleague and politely asked him to stop, but instead he responded by saying it was his way of greeting.

This female participant expressed her disapproval and mentioned the following:

I come from a very staunch family where morals and values are of utmost importance. I was told to always respect the personal space of others and in turn they would respect mine. My colleague clearly does not respect my personal space and I am not comfortable with his behaviour. I think that he is inconsiderate (RC003).

Female participants were made to feel that being a woman meant being a submissive, pregnant housewife. Others were made to feel that being a woman meant combining all types of professions into one identity. One female participant expressed exhaustion in welcoming the negative effects of poor personal boundaries by saying the following:

I feel as though I'm at my wits end. I'm constantly exhausted. At work I'm always busy, trying to prove my worth in an organisation that can't see beyond its stereotypical behaviour. At home I'm busy with being a mother, a wife and doing domestic responsibilities. I often take these masks with me into my home environment and then back to work and vice versa. I feel guilty and unhappy when I let my family down as I know that everyone is dependent on me. I'm supposed to be the nurturer, but who nurtures me? I must be the homemaker, the worker bee, the mother, the teacher, the cook, the healer and yet still make myself happy when there is barely enough time for me (RC001).

A male participant indicated his frustration at home where his wife continued to talk about herself and her problems. He expressed the following:

I feel like I have no support from my wife as she continually talks about her problems, whereas I keep it all in as I can't vent at work about work either. Since she sees me

as the strong person, she has never considered my need to just 'blow my top off'. So, I usually just listen as opposing her would result in chaos at home (RC006).

Individuals without personal boundaries agree to self-made commitments, feel used and abused, fulfil basic responsibilities only rather than making conscious choices to live and love, to work hard and nobly, to fulfil their purpose and to contribute to the world (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Thus an individual's personal, physical and moral boundaries are related to the moral boundaries displayed by society. The conscious aspect of moral boundaries interrelates with unconscious beliefs and assumptions leading to physical and objective behaviours. Since boundaries are social constructs that survive in the minds of people they can be socially deconstructed, unlearned and re-negotiated (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012).

5.6.1.2 Organisational boundaries

An organisation that builds boundaries supports the protection of employees by illuminating their various responsibilities. Leaders in organisations manage group boundaries by managing time, membership, agenda and the utilisation of resources in carrying out tasks (Carsky & Ellman, 1985), in other words, time, space and task boundaries. The setting of boundaries empowers employees to conserve physical and emotional energy by remaining focused on the core values and standards set by the organisation while defining personal limits (Carsky & Ellman, 1985).

Both male and female participants articulated feelings of isolation from the organisation. They expressed feelings of being cut off, isolated, not being listened to, pretences and feeling lost within the domain of workers. Participants felt that the leaders of the organisation put up fronts. They apparently seem to 'hear' us (male and female participants), but refuse to 'listen' to our (male and female participants) views. One female participant articulated the following:

Female leaders think they are queen bee supremacy and want to instead control employees. They feel as though they are better than female subordinates and superior to male subordinates. It's actually sad because they have forgotten where they once were. They choose to 'use' males in authoritative positions remaining fully aware that these 'chosen' men will abide by what they dictate. In the front end the

authoritative man looks like the 'joker' as it's in actual fact the female leader who holds the remote to the game (RC004).

Another female participant made reference to the following:

Male leaders think and project ultimate control. I often wonder what their home lives are if they project such behaviour at work. Situations get so stressed at times especially when I request family leave. And then I'm looked at as though all I ever do is take leave especially when everyone else is apparently working so hard. I'm further requested to indicate the amount of leave taken in my performance plan resulting in negative ratings. At the end of all this, it's my family and I who suffer, as these kinds of issues usually arrives home with me and affects my husband and children (RC001).

Participants revealed awe at the lack of understanding that leaders in the organisation portrayed when it came to understanding that employees do at times have personal crisis and matters to deal with. A male participant expressed the following:

They think that just because I'm a man that I have no right to ask for family leave when my wife is unable to look after the kids, I have no right to be an interactive father and a family man and to handle family commitments and I have no right to be sick either. The only assumable right that I have is to work hours upon hours where I come in early and leave late; looking professional and robot-like. On days when I'm attending to family commitments I receive numerous calls or e-mails from work. There is no respect for family time. When I'm at home I would at times need to sacrifice family time to attend to work issues. When I'm not at work, I'm still at work. It hampers on my family and social time and makes me feel smothered. I feel like my leader is thoughtless and insensitive of my needs and interests and discredits the invasion into my emotional, physical and family space. I feel strangled and entrapped (RC006).

The following was mentioned by a female participant:

I sometimes feel that male leaders are chauvinists as they make assumptions for females and choose not to acknowledge women. During celebratory times, they select to participate in events that are solely man-related and book events at traditionally male-orientated venues – cigar and pool bars and golf courses, like seriously! (RC002).

5.6.2 Social systems

Apart from parents and family members, peer groups, friends and society play a vital role in the upbringing and conditioning of children. External influences often become powerful influences as children become older and more independent. In this section, findings pertaining to family, friends, peers and societal social systems are discussed.

5.6.2.1 Family

Evidence indicates that the traditional matrimonial norms where women play the homemaker role and men execute the provider role no longer apply. Nowadays, and in many households, mothers work late in pursuit of corporate jobs, while fathers are involved in the nurturing of their children. There are some married couples who possess similar gender role attitudes as compared with randomly paired couples (Marks, Chun Bun, & McHale, 2009). In respect of these transitioning roles, a female participant added the following:

Men in families are still perceived as the main breadwinner and preferential treatment is given to him at home and at work. Women should continue to work, but should never allow herself to think about neglecting her children, spouse and domestic duties. A failure in either husband or wife, or both is viewed as a failed couple. Men still desire to be the main provider and women desire to advance their career without having to neglect nurturing and homemaker duties (RC001).

Men have seemingly accepted the transitioning roles of women but are still in two minds where society is concerned. A male participant added as follows:

[T]imes have changed so much. I have to 'act' like the man in front of external family members. If I don't act, then they assume that my wife wears the pants and me the apron. I feel that men and women have come a long way in their style of thinking and neither should be condemned for working together to maintain a successful family life based on equality (RC006).

Gone are the days when the roles of women were segregated and they had to have children only. Women of today can vote and are lawfully protected with equal rights

as men. They are likely to hold jobs and birth about two to three children or have the option of not birthing at all (Chodorow, 1978). According to Chodorow (1978), a few women are however lucky to earn enough money to support herself and her children. The divorce rate is increasing and people are opting to wed at later stages in their lives (Chodorow, 1978). The engagement of men in today's world and in respect of childcare and housework is increasing despite the continuance of domestic obligations that are managed by women. Men have altered the way children perceive gender stereotyping. A father's involvement in childcare and housework validate nurturing and influential activities in the adult male role (Swart, De La Rey, Duncan, Townsend, & O'Neill, 2011).

5.6.2.2 Friends and peers

Individuals are known for preferring friends and peers who exhibit complementary interests and traits. They cherry-pick friends and peers whom they can idealise and those who engage in intriguing performances which they are too anxious to act out themselves (Berndt, 1982). A female participant expressed the following with regard to friends in the organisation:

I love having friends and peers at work, it's kind of a release and it feels good to have someone to talk to, but, I feel afraid to critique their work. I feel that it may affect our relationship as they may think that I'm judgemental (RC002).

Another female participant also expressed her dislike of office politics and added the following:

I try to keep in good books with friends and peers as office politics makes me anxious. I like my relationships to be smooth sailing (RC004).

A male participant expressed his long-standing friendship with his leader and added the following:

My leader and I go way back as friends and now as peers too. I try not to let the friendship with my leader affect the relationship with my co-workers. I don't want to cause any ill feelings between my co-workers and me because at the end of the day we all have to work together (RC007).

Psychodynamic theories explore how an individual's internal world is shaped by relationships, most importantly friendships and peers, where interpersonal experiences are internalised as aspects of personality (Levy, 2009). Close friendships and peer-ships among the opposite genders are tolerated and generally encouraged later on in life. Women are interested in more intimate and exclusive friendships whereas men are gravitated towards assertion and achievements rather than warmth and empathy (Berndt, 1982). During the earlier years, men are discouraged from intimacy with other males due to fears of the negative perceptions associated with homosexuality. Women express dedication and faithfulness toward friends and peers, but suffer from anxiety related to the rejection of friends and peers. Since men are not generally perceived as being overly emotional, they spend less time in leisurely conversations as compared to females (Berndt, 1982).

5.6.2.3 Society

Participants were aware that society is responsible for the deep-rooted belief, which sees women continually accepting primary responsibility for children and households. Nowadays, parenting roles are changing, and it is men who value the close bonds they share with their children. Parental sharing allows both spouses to be multifaceted in roles relating to the household, parents and as parents within occupational roles. Pertaining to the difficult circumstances created by society, a female participant mentioned as follows:

Society makes it extremely difficult with its perceived differences to gender. Society raises girls to think that they can be nothing more but homemakers and boys to believe that being a successful provider means being separated from familial roles and responsibilities (RC004).

Another female participant concurred with the extremities that society projected and shared the following thoughts:

Society alters the mind sets of men and women. Men believe that being a male means wearing a suit and paying the bills whereas women believe that every woman has to be a life-sized Barbie doll with a chicken in the oven. This is the reason why single women are always pressured into searching for a husband who can provide for her and validate her existence as a woman (RC003).

A woman's role, according to society, is to bear children (Bayes & Newton, 1985). The birthing process is followed by responsibilities, such as assuming primary responsibility for infant care, spending time unconditionally with infants and children and nourishing emotional bonds with infants, as compared to men (Neumann, 1955). According to Neumann (1955), biological mothers who are unable to parent are replaced by other women. Three motherly distinctions as introduced by Neumann (1955) are as follows:

- the good mother – nurturing, giving and caring;
- the terrible mother – aggressive and overwhelming, and,
- the great mother – a combination of the above attributes.

Centuries have passed, and women continue to persevere in remaining dedicated towards their motherly childcare and domestic roles, inevitably assuming the great motherly role (Chodorow, 1978). Many traditional cultures encourage men to remain powerful and to associate their power with aggression, assertion and authoritarian standards. The focus on man's masculinity indicates that not all men benefit equally from male supremacy (Swart *et al.*, 2011) since it is women who are recognised as the authoritative figure (Maccoby, 2004). Children classify their mothers to be extremely powerful and crucial for survival (Ribbens, 1994) and perceive her as someone who can damage her helpless and dependent children due to her role as the primary caregiver (Maccoby, 2004). According to Swart *et al.* (2011), defensive, accommodating and progressive strategies are three categories denoting the responses to gender change by men. *Defensive* suggests that men are upholding traditional gender roles while defying challenges faced by feminism and women's groups. *Accommodating* and *progressive* strategies are indicative of man's adjustment to change and in welcoming the change. Men are involved in opposing violent and aggressive stereotypes by discovering new ways of being men (Swart *et al.*, 2011).

5.6.3 Organisational gender transformation (equity) interventions

Gender transformation revolutionises an organisation from its old and chaotic state to a new and youthful state and shape. In this section, organisational policies and practices, organisational culture and diversity training are discussed.

5.6.3.1 Organisational policies and practices

Male and female participants indicated that the transformation of policies and procedures of the organisation concerns those who are interested in social change, especially the affected men and women. They further indicated that men and women are either excluded or discriminated against when using certain benefits associated with the organisation, namely maternity leave, paternal leave, health policies, transgender policies and family policies, indicating an apparent match or mismatch between policy and practice. A female participant mentioned the following:

I feel that gender equality policies look good on paper but [they] should also be put into practice. Management spends hours in developing gender equality policies but fail to remember the human aspect to structuring the very same policies (RC003).

The continuous interaction of an organisation with its people will enable a productive flow in the policies of the organisation and its productivity as indicated by the following male participant:

The organisation's management and human resources department should engage with employees in order to gather facts and valuable experiences. They should consider promoting gender-neutral career paths, modify performance review processes and make gender parity a strategic objective (RC006).

The introduction of fair and equitable family policies is likely to ensure that male employees – and especially female employees – are kept satisfied in both work and home life as the following female participant added:

Organisations should consider modifying the performance review process for those sexes who are disadvantaged due to work–life balances. It will be appreciated if we [females] were not penalised for flexibility pertaining to family responsibilities (RC001).

This participant would like to see fair and equitable recruitment strategies as indicated by this male participant as follows:

Organisations are to ensure that suitable candidates are contributory towards the talent pool – made up of men and women – and are recruited using revised policies and practices instead of implementing rigid quotas (RC007).

Acker (1990) discusses the following five systematic theories of gender and organisations that are required for a number of reasons, since most research is studied using traditional methods and has not been collaborated in a systemic feminist theory of organisations:

- gender segregation of work – this incorporates divisions between paid and unpaid work that is partially created through organisational practices;
- income and status equality – between males and females, which is created in the organisational process and is related to gender segregation;
- organisations are in one arena – this allows for widely disseminated cultural images of gender to be invented and reproduced;
- individual gender identity – relates particularly to masculinity and is the product of organisational processes and pressures; and
- feminist project – permits large-scale organisations to be more democratic and supportive of humane goals (Acker, 1990).

An investigation pertaining to policies and practices proves important especially when the organisation is mandated to promoting equitable human development (Walker, 1999).

5.6.3.2 Organisational culture

An organisational culture that is properly designed and embedded and which is closely linked to an effective gender strategy is bound to indicate the differences between success and failure in the organisation (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Organisational culture regulates boundaries by instilling a set of normative procedures, on employees, to synchronise aspects of behaviour while giving rise to attitudes, motivations and shared identity, which influence the efficiency of the

organisation. Organisational culture is the difference between truly high-performing organisations as compared to the rest (Davidson, Coetzee, & Visser, 2007).

Participants provided ways and methods in which the organisation could make a positive change in an attempt to boost the culture of the organisation, as expressed by the following participant:

There should be a change in the corporate culture of the organisation, especially regarding gender stereotypes and the introduction of work-life balance programmes (RC005).

Gender-neutral career opportunities are likely to provide employees with fair and equal career advancements in the organisations as indicated by this participant as follows:

The organisation should promote gender-neutral flexible career paths and encourage employees to participate (RC004).

The treatment of employees should be fair in all areas during policymaking. A participant indicated her concern regarding the outdated thinking of the organisation due to familial and non-familial reasoning and shared the following:

The organisation should consider changing its thinking culture regarding 'no promotions' for pregnant mothers or toward men with or without children (RC001).

Gender equity is an initiative that is brought about by management and not by subordinates who are likely to follow the initiatives formed by management. This participant expressed the line of commitment that should be followed in the organisation by adding the following:

There should be a top-down commitment when addressing gender parity issues (RC007).

Career growth should not only be based on the gender of the individual, but instead should be made possible for all individuals as claimed by the following participant:

Unconscious bias should be eliminated allowing all employees equal opportunities to grow and learn. Organisations should bring forth a more focused approach to address the men and women who were previously left behind (RC002).

A female participant expressed that women are no less than men and that the capabilities of women should not be based upon stereotypes as she said the following:

Women are highly capable of achieving good positions without using gender stereotypes and by creating a gender balance. There is no joy, but only belittlement when women are promoted purely based on gender (RC003).

Happy and driven employees are likely to result in a highly competitive organisation as shared by the following participant:

The organisation will benefit when it provides equal opportunities to all employees as this will assist in healthy competition. Employees will feel appreciated and productivity will increase (RC008).

The next participant expressed that gender equitable organisations will attract positive attention in which external candidates will aim for an opportunity to be a part of the organisation as follows:

The organisation that maintains a reputable reputation will attract suitably qualified candidates based on merit and not gender (RC006).

The same participant indicated as follows that a market-driven organisation is likely to be more successful than one that is based on playing gender games:

The organisation will benefit when its focus is based on their niche market rather than playing equity catch up (RC006).

Organisations that enhance the career opportunities of their employees are likely to retain them as pointed out by this participant as follows:

The organisation will have an abundance of highly motivated employees who are likely to promote themselves by studying and advancing their careers within the organisation, resulting in employee retention (RC004).

The following participant indicated that, when employees find their fit, it is likely that the organisation will benefit:

Employees want to be part of a winning team resulting in organisational collaborations, financial stability and profit growth (RC005).

The same participant indicated that in order to enhance the mental health of the employees a review of the policies and practices of the organisation is required as follows:

Well-reviewed policies and practices and a well-branded organisational culture will increase the psychological well-being of employees. Healthy employees will result in a healthy organisation (RC005).

The culture of an organisation brings purpose and meaning into the lives of its members. It imbues life into the organisation and provides its members with an authentic outlet for emotion and a defensive shield against misfortune and suffering. The culture of an organisation presents its employees with a symbolic representation for converting passivity into activity, powerlessness into control, and for making organisational life endurable and even pleasurable (Gabriel, 1991).

5.6.3.3 Diversity training

Diversity awareness and training could go a long way in healing the splits, managing anxieties and appreciating what the 'other' has to offer in the working environment. This was evident from participants' responses on how, for example, a more equitable workplace could be created and sustained. Organisational leaders who propose diversity initiatives facilitate the success of organisational changes (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012). Organisations that adopt gender diversity training programmes are large in size and empower a positive management who recognises a need for diversity. This indicates highly strategic priorities of diversity and the presence of a gender diversity manager and a large number of gender diversity supportive policies (Luthans, 2011).

A few participants provided the following input towards diversity training since they believe that diversity training that is provided fairly to men and women will result in bringing forth positive changes and enhance a boost in the mood of the organisation and its people. In light of boosting the mood of women, a female participant had the following to add:

The organisation should consider highlighting all gender issues through a forum for women. They should encourage women empowerment as well as draft policies against the discrimination of women (RC004).

The next participant spoke for both men and women when he suggested that training opportunities are relevant for both genders as follows:

The organisation should consider allowing all employees, men and women, the opportunity of attending relevant internal diversity training programmes. Management and human resources can benefit the organisation and its employees by recruiting gender equality balances (RC006).

This participant expressed that gender diversity programmes would create stability and a balance in the home and work life of employees as follows:

Gender diversity programmes will ensure that all employees are motivated, and morale will be high ensuring greater success for the organisation. There will be a positive impact in society and family lives as employees will remain peaceful even when they aren't at work (RC001).

Men and women are likely to feel motivated and driven into performing at a deeper level as expressed by this participant in the following:

Diversity programmes will see to it that men and women are encouraged to reach their full potential (RC008).

Time and money should not be wasted on mediocre programmes. The programmes must be planned, implemented and applied daily as well as in all areas of the hierarchy of the organisation as iterated in the following by this participant:

Organisations should walk the talk. Diversity programmes should be embedded into every cell deep within the organisation and not forgotten once the training has ended (RC003).

Gender diversity programmes will create a positive working relationship between men and women, as well as eliminating the old way of thinking and managing as expressed by this participant in the following:

Gender diversity programmes will enhance male and female employee relationships. As Jackie Fleming [cartoonist] stated, "Don't change your body, change the rules". I

think that diversity programmes will not only change the rules, but break old-fashioned and intimidating rules (RC002).

Gender diversity training offers two ways in which it can play a vital role in the organisation: offering training to gendered groups, and providing training to managers and other employees who work with diverse employees (Luthans, 2011). Gender diversity interventions are ubiquitous in large organisations that are managed by diversity-friendly management and human resource policies, as well as those who adopt internal evaluations of gender diverse training programmes (Cummings & Worley, 2015).

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the findings of the research study were discussed. This chapter commenced with a presentation on the main themes and sub-themes. The main and sub-themes were discussed in detail in the sections that followed. The chapter concluded with a summary.

In the next chapter, the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the conclusions, limitations and recommendations are discussed based on the findings of the research. The chapter commences with a discussion on the conclusions and the limitations of the study. Recommendations are then made for the organisation, government and future research studies. This chapter concludes with a summary.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

This section discusses conclusions relevant to the literature review and the research study.

6.2.1 Conclusions drawn from the literature review

As a reminder to the readers, the following general aims and specific aims were formulated:

The **general aim** of this study was to describe gender role experiences and gender transformation in a government organisation from a systems psychodynamic stance.

The **specific literature aims** were:

- to explore organisations from the systems psychodynamic stance;
- to explore gender, gender roles and gender inequality in the literature; and
- to explore gender transformation in the literature.

The **specific empirical aims** were:

- to describe the gender role experiences and gender transformation of employees in a government organisation from a systems psychodynamics perspective
- to make recommendations to the participating organisation based on the findings from the study

The discussion follows below.

6.2.1.1 To explore organisations from the systems psychodynamic stance

The literature review defined and described an organisation as a systematically structured social entity, which enables individuals to reach targets on a continuous basis (Osifo, 2012). Further, an organisation is a physical entity, built with physical structures and consisting of organisational members who operate from within the physical boundaries of the organisation (Rafaeli, 1996). The definition and description relating to organisations indicate that today's organisations are segregated since they operate and function like machines and "psychic prisons" where men and women are being subjected to many inharmonious wishes, fantasies, struggles, defensive behaviours and anxieties (Millet, 1998, p.2).

Organisations were studied from a systems perspective (individual, group and organisation or micro, meso- and macro levels), and it was apparent that a change in any one of the systems inevitably causes an effect in the rest of the system (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002). Systemic boundaries present themselves in two forms: personal and organisational, and are identified as the connection between employees and the organisation (Harrison & Singer, 2014). Boundaries were viewed as unconscious (organisation-in-the-mind) and as contributing to the thoughts and emotions that shape the strategies and actions of the organisation. The psychoanalytical understanding of organisational boundaries, their surfaces and silos contribute to a deeper understanding of the dysfunction of the organisation and the need for change (Diamond *et al.*, 2004). Anxiety arises in employees who project emotions of feeling lost, in all stages of their life, and who endure unmanageable

relationships and inconsistent boundaries. These employees experience feelings of insecurity due to organisational changes (White, 2009).

The first level of influence within an organisation is regarded as the micro system (Kaat & De Kroon, 2017). It was determined that the micro system was found where previous experiences and meaningful individuals develop and operate on an unconscious level (May *et al.*, 2012). Hence, organisations form an intrapsychic reality where the individual forms an intrapsychic world as an integral part of the micro system (Kaat & De Kroon, 2017). Upon entering the organisation, employees attempt to fulfil the unfulfilled and unconscious family needs, which is due to their internal psychic reality (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). In Bergh *et al.* (2009), Freud's level of conscious awareness within micro systems aims to understand why employees behave the way they do. Thus, the study of defence mechanisms allows for the rich understanding of their use in assisting employees with anxiety and internal distresses (Kenny, 2011). The manifestations of these defence mechanisms enable employees to operate on an unconscious level where they feel less threatened and attempt to continue along their job roles (Cramer, 2009).

Meso-systems are based on the interrelations between groups of people within the organisation (Tudge *et al.*, 2009). Groups are identified as united teams of people who operate on two levels – that of the sophisticated work group and the basic assumption level. Groups work together to support each other and to complete their tasks (Geldenhuys, 2012). However, groups are likely to experience problems when unconscious complications arise due to short-term involvements, which result in pressures and aggravations within the group, leaving the group worse off than what it was at the initial stage (Vault, 2009). As such, the object relations theory (see Townley, 2008) put into perspective the fears that employees experience when operating within groups, such as the fear of rejection and abandonment by the group (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012). Bion's (1961) basic assumption levels were considered for studying relationships in the organisational systems since these assumptions address the behaviour of the individual, the group (meso-) and the organisation (Cilliers, 2000) and present specialised problematic dynamics, which is used by consultants to enhance work group development (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002).

Macro systems consist of rules that form a foundation in the organisation. The macro system further, constitutes a sum of aggregate consequences, which is represented by the population structure of the meso-system (Dopfer *et al.*, 2004). However, within a macro system a change at the organisational level creates a ripple effect throughout the organisation (Robbins *et al.*, 2009). As such, individuals within the macro system are dependent on the support of their leaders during the times of change. Moreover, a lack of support by leaders will result in strong and demonstrative emotions in employees, such as anxiety, resistance, unpredictability and irrationality (Barabasz, 2016). Organisational leaders are expected to form support structures for employees and to become positive mirrors with a common vision, mission and action (Kiley *et al.*, 2015). Hence, during times of organisational crisis, a positive side of mirroring is born from unity, despite the temporariness of the organisations crises. Individuals and leaders defer self-criticism and face organisational crises with a common vision and action (Kets de Vries, 2013).

6.2.1.2 To explore gender, gender roles and gender inequality in the literature

This study defined gender based on roles, behaviours, activities and attributes, which are considered appropriate by society for both men and women (Smith, 2006). Gender explains how the biology (which relates to the sexual differences of individual's) of individual's are culturally valued and understood and the real meaning of what it means to be either a man or a woman (Reeves & Baden, 2000). However, hierarchical and authoritative relationships between men and women does not stem directly from biology but are instead socially constructed (Reeves & Baden, 2000, p.30).

In this study, gender roles were defined as the conscious and unconscious assumptions of proper behaviour, attitudes and activities, displayed by men and women (Irefin *et al.*, 2012). However, according to traditional societies, the roles of men and women are segregated by sexual differences where men work outside of the home and women are expected to assume responsibility for family and household duties (Haspels & Suriyasarn, 2010). Hence, traditional gender role conditionings are contributed to a man-made consciousness which permits women to believe that they are well-suited for domestic roles only and men are encouraged

not act weak (Irefin *et al.*, 2012). Men and women in organisations have been continually affected by oppressions in the past. Men face unnecessary pressure in trying to uphold past regimes while women attempt to break free from past regimes by attempting to prove their worth in male-dominated organisations. Men and women have come a long way from the traditional gender role perspectives (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010). Many men and women realise comfort in the reversal of roles, which find men dedicating time to developing valuable bonds with their children while women (wives or partners) are instead considered the sole breadwinners in the home (Davies, 2014). Transgender persons, however, inhabit a gender identity that is different from traditional gender roles. As such, the gender identification of a transgender tends either to violate the heteronormative theory of male and female or to blend the diverse identities and role aspects of being male or female (Nagoshi *et al.*, 2012). The term heteronormative is a theory that encourages heterosexuality, which is the normal or preferred sexual orientation and which falls within the alignment of biological sex, sexuality, gender identity and gender roles (Jackson, 2006).

This study found that gender inequality is widespread and extraordinarily diverse, and refers to the inconceivable inequality between men and women in endless circumstances, both immediate and enduring, by both objective criteria and subjective experiences (Jackson, 2017). Thus, gender inequality is the systematic, unfavourable treatment of individuals on the basis of gender, which denies them rights, opportunities or resources (Reeves & Baden, 2000). Furthermore, gender inequality is not a man's or a woman's problem, but rather a problem of humanity as an entirety. It would appear that rejecting gender inequality as an exclusive man or woman's issue provides excuses to dismiss ownership by both sexes. Overcoming gender inequality requires time, patience, dedication and leaders who are focused on gender parity (Davies, 2014).

6.2.1.3 Exploring gender transformation in the literature

According to this study, gender transformation is defined as a development that seeks to go beyond the warning signs of gender inequality in order to address the social norms, attitudes, behaviours and social systems that underlie those

(Hillenbrand *et al.*, 2015). Organisational gender transformation, on the other hand, is a new universal building block (Rao & Kelleher, 2003). According to Rao and Kelleher (2003), it is a knowledge-based network aimed at promoting organisational change by means of encouraging development organisations to evaluate gender relations in societies in which they work and in environments that require challenging (Rao & Kelleher, 2003).

Gender transformation assesses historical attempts of organisational development programmes in order to mainstream gender at the current level and in working environments as well as to develop programmes and processes to challenge organisational norms working against the interests of the workforce (Rao & Kelleher, 2003). Gender transformational initiatives require the use of sensitive approaches to assist in overcoming gender inequality. Gender transformative approaches are expected to uncover the deep-rooted causes of gender inequality between men and women in the organisation. A few methods are considered in bringing forth gender transformation within the organisation, namely a review of the organisations policies, practices and organisational culture together with an introduction of diversity training programmes (Morgan, 2014).

Rao and Kelleher (2003) introduce two organisational approaches in aid of bringing forward ways of working on gender equality as follows:

- a gender infrastructure approach – consists of organisational gender policies, a gender unit and gender training, and includes the development of gender analysis tools; and
- an organisational change approach – involves constructing organisational capacity to dispute gender-biased institutional guidelines.

Haspels and Suriyasarn (2010) proposed three gender equality perspectives to eradicate sex discrimination in an attempt to support the equality between men and women as follows:

- sameness perspective – aims towards equal treatment of men and women;

- protectionist perspective – suggests that women should avoid all unsuitable and dangerous work, and advocates against sexual harassment by promoting sexual discrimination in the form of protection; and
- equality in outcomes perspective – acknowledges the differences in men and women, obtains equality and eliminates discrimination against men and women.

Mena (2016) identified three fair and equitable gender actions for implementing in organisations as follows:

- training employees to identify and reduce biases;
- implementing clear and structured criteria for hiring and evaluations; and
- enforcing accountability and transparency.

Three gender transformation projections are identified as follows:

- Organisational policies and practices – this is a holistic and structural approach to gender needs that encourage the organisation to tackle policies that address the link between families, the labour market, political and social security, allowing men and women to escape the gender trap (Davaki, 2016).
- Organisational gender training – gender training is a mechanism used to raise organisational gender awareness, gender-awareness planning, programme design and implementation. Research suggests that the effectiveness of training intensifies when such training is part of a broader strategy of organisational change (Reeves & Baden, 2000).
- Family policy – men and women included in the formulation of family policies are able to provide advice on real choices regarding the pattern of preferred work. Universal career models accommodate family life and leisure, as well as deal with individual childcare and elderly needs. Such benefits permit mothers and fathers to remain active in an increasingly competitive labour market and to maximise control in their lives (Davaki, 2016).

6.2.2 Conclusions drawn from the empirical study

The following conclusions were drawn from the empirical study and relate to the specific aims of the study:

6.2.2.1 To describe the gender role experiences and gender transformation of employees in a government organisation from a systems psychodynamics perspective

In this study, participants reported experiencing anxieties in their gender roles, as well as different levels of psychological maladjustment, resulting in the deployment of defence mechanisms. Individuals behave like containers since their purpose is to work hard, to manage situations that are threatening and to satisfy others (Cilliers, 2003a). According to Cilliers (2012), individuals are affected further by their neurotic need for recognition. The organisation makes use of the psychological needs of individuals for rewards, such as recognition, and further introjects the system's performance of anxiety, fear of failure, shame and persecutory anxiety (Cilliers, 2012). Individuals portray different personages in the organisation due to feeling lost, being robbed of their identity and loss of their real self. The leaders of the organisation consciously attempt to oversee tasks in a rational way by unconsciously undermining the performance of women in a destructive manner. Some females mimic sponges since they absorb (projective identification) undesirable feelings from the organisation, which implies that they cannot cope (Cilliers, 2003a). Women encounter exhaustion due to problems that they experience at work and often relay these organisational problems to their home environment resulting in adverse effects in family life (Gunter & Stambach, 2003).

In this study, it was confirmed that men experience the compulsion of fulfilling the breadwinner and chauvinistic roles due to societal brainwashing (Cornwall, 2005). Roles that are indifferent to the breadwinner and chauvinism roles lead to questions being raised regarding men and their manhood. Some men experience an increase in pressure when they take it upon themselves to carry the burden of burnout in taking over the most of the work roles (Cilliers, 2003a). According to Cilliers (2003a), men feel that their current allocation in job roles is due to manipulation and exploitation owing to their gender since the organisation assumes that they portray an image of getting the job done, which leads to further de-authorisation and

disempowerment of individuals. Men and women who experience fearfulness towards raising organisational concerns feel disempowered and project dissimilar images at work. This fearfulness and the fear of the future results in men remaining neutral and silenced in the workplace and brings forth the suffering of both men and women (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1992). Transgendered individuals experience unfair treatment based upon their gender identity. However, they require similar treatment in respect of career advancements and to express their need to live a normal life with family to nurture, ambitions to achieve, as well as to 'climb up the corporate ladder', just like everyone else (Byne *et al.*, 2012).

Gender transformative interventions are introduced in an attempt to transform the organisation and its employees. It is believed that initiatives, such as gender approaches, gender perspectives and gender actions will assist the organisation in providing an environment that is psychologically healthy (Morgan, 2014). Employees can find relief in gender transformative interventions in the policies and practices of the organisation and an introduction of diversity training programmes. The introduction into gender transformative programmes is aimed at success on condition that support is obtained from the leaders of the organisation (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015).

The themes that surfaced during the interviews therefore describe the phenomenological experiences of the participants. The themes are as follows:

a. Male and female gender roles experiences

The twenty-first century welcomes fast-paced adaptations in the work and family roles of men and women (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). With roles such as wife, mother and employee, women experience role overload, role conflict, guilt, anxiety and other attributes contributing to the impairment of their mental health (Baruch & Barnett, 1986). Traditional and domesticated mothers are assumed to be submissive, non-risk-takers, affectionate, considerate and giving unlike the mothers of today who are daring, adventurous and competitive proving the complete opposite to traditional and domesticated women. Ideal women are capable of displaying professionalism

(readily available when needed) and motherhood (unconstrained availability) in order to satisfy both expectations, namely career and motherhood (Hodges & Park, 2013).

Male participants disclose the effects of the continuous struggle to release the oppressions from the past, which continually hover over them. Men are undeniably and continuously labelled and expected by tradition to be strong, to be breadwinners, and to be non-emotional whereas women are expected to be fragile homemakers and caregivers (Perrone-McGovern *et al.*, 2009). Being a male is associated with ego as men reveal the incessant exertion to prove their masculine strength, which entails physical and emotional strength, firmness and status (Miehls, 2017). Some men are of the opinion that women should actually be regarded as the stronger of the two genders taking into consideration that they are multi-talented and multi-tasked in succeeding within the various roles of; wife, mother and employee (Sanghani, 2016). Some men also feel somewhat negative about their role in the organisation – irrespective of their continued work effort – as they are not recognised for career advancement by female authoritative figures in the organisation (Acker, 1990; Rarieya, 2013). According to Rarieya (2013), men experience that every now and then females are provided with leadership roles that are based purely on gender and to satisfy the gender equity gap.

The expression, 'man-as-worker' implies that men consider the organisation a sports ground with continuous brawling in an effort to ascertain identities in which successes and failures are measured. Home is regarded as a sanctuary where the man-as-worker returns home daily to lick the inward wounds scored off the sports ground (Barnett *et al.*, 1992). Men and women benefit from multiple roles due to the positive reflection in psychological, physiological and relationship health. The worker role modelled by women and the family role presented by men prove beneficial and contribute to the strong dedication that is possessed in which one role does not supersede the other role. Multiple roles offer opportunities for success and failure or malfunctioning, such as frustration, workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, unstable physical health, dysfunctional relationships and psychological maladjustments (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Doubtful women and those who fail on the career path are supported by returning to the domesticated path to resume the parent identity (mother) as a means of affirming the self. Men in comparison observe

career failure and the path of activating the parent identity (father) as unsatisfactory and resort to continuing along the career path in order to restore self-integrity (Hodges & Park, 2013).

b. Transgender role experiences

A transgender participant revealed experiences of alienation, isolation and rejection from the organisation since his gender identity was dissimilar to traditional gender roles and identities (Nagoshi *et al.*, 2012). This participant's experience of anxieties were the result of having to defend himself against the recruitment and retirement processes of the organisation, training opportunities, employee benefits and job advancement (Divan *et al.*, 2016).

c. Defence mechanisms against the anxiety of being 'different'

Defence mechanisms serve as coping mechanisms when dealing with negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, stress, sadness and depression, which arise from unconscious conflicts (Kiley *et al.*, 2015). Participants are often unconscious of how they use defence mechanisms as coping strategies indicating the distortion and unreal images of themselves and their environments on a conscious level (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). The projected defence mechanisms of this participant ranged from narcissistic defences (see Peled & Geva, 1999) to immature defences, neurotic defences and mature defences (see Bowins, 2004).

d. Systemic influences on gender role experiences

Participants experienced systemic influences in the form of boundaries and social systems. Boundaries are considered important for the connection of individuals with each other (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Men continue to discover their eagerness towards childcare and housework (Swart *et al.*, 2011) and women continue to realise their ambitions towards organisational success (Chodorow, 1978).

e. Organisational gender transformation (equity) interventions

Organisational policies that are subjected to fair and equitable gender practices ensure that different outcomes for men and women are yielded. A holistic and structural approach to gender needs challenges policies that address the links between families, the labour market, political and social security which allow men and women to escape the gender trap (Davaki, 2016). Gender training is used as a mechanism to raise organisational gender awareness, gender-awareness planning, programme design and implementation (Reeves & Baden, 2000). This involves group discussions together with the reflection of gender roles and relations, case studies regarding the effect of organisational policies and programmes in gender relations, role plays and simulation games highlighting gender dynamics. Tailored gendered training and courses are introduced as awareness expands (Reeves & Baden, 2000). An organisational culture climate exposes the behaviour of employees regardless of the existence of strong gender-informed policies (Lang, 2003).

6.2.2.2 To make recommendations to the participating organisation based on the findings from the study

Recommendations to the participating organisation are presented in section 6.4.1 of this thesis.

6.3 CONTRIBUTIONS

The contributions of the research study are as follows:

- This study contributes towards understanding the individuals in organisations and provides insight relating to the organisation as a system in which an individual is more than a physical body, and is a micro system, which integrates a personality structure, personality and workplace perspectives and defence mechanisms. Group theories contribute towards the positive and negative effects of working in groups within organisations. Organisations as macro systems provide supportive structures to employees resulting in positive mirroring (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013). Organisations that provide healthy mirroring assist those employees who are stuck between the mirror (an echo of self-appraisal) and the mask (a camouflage

in search of an echo) (Bromberg, 1993). This study indicates that despite in-house problems, organisational members possess the ability to work together in a unified manner in order to confront the gender crises in the organisation by encountering it with a common vision, action and more importantly by displaying positive mirroring (Kets de Vries *et al.*, 2013). This study further supported, was aware of and understood the psychodynamic maladjustments that gender inequality have on individuals, personally and professionally. Such psychological maladjustments conceivably disrupt components of the system when they are not controlled in a psychologically contained manner.

- This study contributes to the categorisation of organisations as ‘psychic prisons’ since they envisage the idea that all organisations serve and substantiate male-dominance, with specific types of female-gendered jobs. Such philosophies shape fears and anxieties, activate defence mechanisms and lead to dysfunctional behaviours.
- The main contribution of the study is that males and females are both treated unfairly in certain aspects of their work. The gender inequality experienced by males and females suffocate the chances of a flow in equal relationships between the two genders, especially in the workplace. The changing gender roles nowadays indicate the daily struggles and busyness that men and women display throughout their lives. The struggle for recognition increases as women feel undervalued since they are still considered weak and men feel pressured being breadwinners and into being strong while displaying a lack in emotion. The traditional impression created by society – where women are only good enough to be caregivers and men are good enough to be breadwinners – continues in the minds of many people today. Women are bogged down by the idea that they are only successful on the home front, whereas men today would like to create and strengthen family bonds. This study revealed the incessant need that men and women have in wanting to understand their gender differences and identity orientations. This study further indicated the desire that males and females have in creating a balance in gender and in the change in mind-sets needed by many people in today’s society.
- This study supported and contributes towards the gender equality of men and women in organisations. This study provides contributions towards the

introduction of gender equality policies, practices and initiatives that are called upon by employees in order to empower males and females professionally and personally by bringing about gender transformation in the organisation.

- This study contributes towards the understanding of how the gender ideology of parents' influences the ways in which children view gender. Children who are raised by parents with more traditional views are likely to think from traditional perspectives.
- This study contributes towards the understanding of how gendered behaviours of parents' influence and encourage the way in which children proceed throughout the rest of their lives. Parents may promote gender stereotypical play, where girls are encouraged to play with dolls and boys are encouraged to play with motor cars or trucks. Parents may, knowingly or unknowingly, mimic certain types of gender normative behaviour where mothers attend to household chores and fathers are the breadwinners of the home.
- This study contributes towards the self-identity of dual-career couples and the roles and responsibilities that each one takes at home resulting in less male dominance. Despite time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based conflicts, dual-career couples contribute towards the equality in both men and women and allows children to interpret their relationship from a gender equality stance.
- This study contributes towards and supports transgenders. Transgenders experience isolation and unacceptance, both professionally and personally, many of whom are denied existence and are exposed to constant discrimination, harassment, violence, bullying and fear. The participating transgender employee expressed the desire to be accepted by society without being ostracised and excluded. This study further understood that gender equality relating to transgender persons cannot be realised only through introducing gender parity initiatives since there are underlying dynamics and countless complications that need attention before acceptance can be welcomed whole-heartedly, with both mind and heart.

6.3.1 Personal contributions of the study

Before the commencement of this research study, my view on gender inequality was very minimalistic. I, just like everyone else, assumed that gender inequality was in fact a 'women' problem, where women were the only victims. Once I assumed this study, I discovered that gender inequality is equally a 'male' problem too. Males are just as much victims as women are and both genders are victims of the past, as well as victims of the role that society plays pertaining to gender divisions. This study assisted me to understand the phenomenological experiences of real-life people through the interviews that were conducted. The interviews provided rich and unique data, which indicated the psychological maladjustments that were introduced due to gender inequality in the organisation.

It was disturbing to learn that the organisation is still set in its old ways despite the trials and tribulations that men and women have endured. The study provided some interesting methods of transformation within the organisation. I believe that these methods, with the co-operation of management, will provide a fair and equitable way forward for the success, improvement and most importantly for the psychological well-being of the organisation and its employees.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for improvement in the organisation, for awareness in government and for improving future research.

6.4.1 Recommendations for the organisation

The following recommendations are suggested, based on the themes, sub-themes, literature review and interviews, in order to improve the ways and methods of the organisation:

- This study revealed many challenges relating to gender equality. The results will be shared with the organisation in an attempt to bring forth awareness in the minds of the organisation. This shared awareness indicates the influence of gender equality on the culture of the organisation, on gender equality initiatives and on the work–family interface aimed at understanding and promoting gender equality, which men and women have to face daily.

- Attention should be drawn to the organisation as a system, to the changing gender roles of men and women and towards the gender inequality attributes of men and women and the effect of these roles and attributes in the professional and personal lives of these individuals.
- Together with an organisational psychologist and the human resource department, well-suited policies and practices on gender equality pertaining to men and women should be formulated, implemented and later reviewed.
- Together with an organisational psychologist, a transgender spokesperson and the human resource department should formulate, implement and review well-suited policies and practices pertaining to transgender men and women.
- Since leaders are enablers of change, it is recommended for these leaders to create an understanding of the employees' gender experiences in the workplace and most importantly, of what pose as challenges in fulfilling job roles. The contributed understanding towards employees' work sense of identity may provide support for the employees (and vice versa).
- In an effort to empower male and female employees, it is imperative for organisations to introduce diversity training programmes. This training should have a conscious as well as unconscious focus. The training should be mandatory in the organisation and should be applied to new recruits but also towards annual refresher courses for older employees. The knowledge gained from the training should be implemented and used throughout the lifetime of the organisation and not forgotten once the training is over. Gender training should be effective in order to empower enrichment in men and women to pursue their domestic and professional roles more effectively.

6.4.2 Recommendations for the government

The following recommendations are suggested, based on the themes, sub-themes, literature review and interviews, in order to improve the ways and methods of government to address gender equality issues:

- The findings of this study should be shared with the relevant stakeholders in government to empower men and women.

- Transformative interventions should be synchronised across all government departments.
- All employees and leaders within government departments should attend diversity training programmes.
- Government departments should adopt a systems psychodynamic approach of coaching and mentoring male and female leaders.

6.4.3 Recommendations for future research

The following are recommendations for future research:

- Future research should incorporate a wide variety of roles that could influence gender, such as managers, students and the community.
- Future research should be extended to other public sector departments in order to obtain an in-depth perspective of gender in South Africa.

6.5 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations manifested in relation to the literature review and empirical study.

6.5.1 Limitations of the literature review

The limitations that manifested from the literature review are as follows:

- Literature is limited in terms of identifying the gender inequality that men experience from a systems psychodynamic perspective since most gender-related research pertains to women and from a more conscious perspective.
- Literature from a systems psychodynamic perspective lacked research based on transgender persons and their systems psychodynamic behaviours.

6.5.2 Limitations of the empirical study

The limitations in terms of the empirical study are as follows:

- There are many other contributing factors that could have been added to the behaviours of the participants in terms of how they experience their gender roles that were not discussed (such as extended family attributes, a broken car, an accident).
- The topic of this study proved to be wider than expected. A larger sample size could have addressed a wider range of gender-related issues.
- The sample comprised three men, four women and one transgender male, which formed a diverse representation of the organisation. The study did not focus on any factors relating to age or race but purely gender, which could have played a role as well.
- Since the researcher formed part of the same organisation, this might have posed a problem. The researcher managed to be aware of and hopefully contain her own inner conflicts in being mindful of her responses and actions during the study and especially during the interviews.

6.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the conclusions, limitations and recommendations were discussed based on the research findings. The contributions were also discussed. An assessment of the literature review and empirical study was provided. This chapter concluded with a summary.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNISA CEMS/IOP RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

09th July 2018

Dear Reshmika Caithram,

**Decision: Ethics Approval from
09th July 2018 to 09th July 2021**

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
ERC Reference # : 2018_CEMS/IOP_ 016
Name : Reshmika Caithram
Student # : 32891857
Staff # :

Researcher(s): Name: Reshmika Caithram
Address: 705 Klipbank Street, Wingate Park, 0181
E-mail address, telephone: resh.chaith@gmail.com, 082 220

Supervisor (s): Mr Aden Flotman
E-mail address, telephone: flotma@unisa.ac.za, (012) 429-4879

**A systems psychodynamic description of gender inequality and gender
transformation in a public sector organisation**

Qualification: Postgraduate degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for **Three** years.

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee on the 09th July 2018 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved on 09th July 2018.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee.



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3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (09th July 2021). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2018_CEMS/IOP_016** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Signature

Chair of IOP ERC

E-mail: grobis@unisa.ac.za

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Signature

Executive Dean : CEMS

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ANNEXURE B: CERTIFICATE FROM THE EDITOR

Jackie Viljoen
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Accredited member of the South African Translators' Institute
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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the thesis by RESHMIKA CHAITHRAM was properly language edited but without viewing the final version.

The track changes function was used and the author was responsible for accepting the editor's changes and for finalising the reference list.

Title of thesis:

**A SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC DESCRIPTION OF GENDER ROLE EXPERIENCES
AND GENDER TRANSFORMATION IN A GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION**

The editor did not write or rewrite any part of the thesis on behalf of the client, including passages that may have been plagiarised. The academic content is the sole responsibility of the client as author of the work. The editor could not and did not test definitively for plagiarism, nor is there any explicit or implicit guarantee that the content that was edited contained no material used without consent. The editor accepts no responsibility for any failure on examination of the thesis by the university.



JACKIE VILJOEN
Strand
South Africa
21 September 2019